

CHAPTERS ON THE METRIC OF THE CHAUCERIAN TRADITION

BY
ALBERT H. LICKLIDER

A Dissertation

SUBMITTED TO THE BOARD OF UNIVERSITY STUDIES OF THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
IN CONFORMITY WITH THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

1907

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ERRATA

- P. 4 (and once or twice elsewhere, due to careless manuscript). For *octasyllable* read *octosyllable*.
- P. 6. For *synezeisis* read *synizesis*.
- P. 34. For *Blauuche* 465, 466, read 265, 266.
- Pp. 35, 36. For *House* read *Hous*.
- P. 38. For *pronetic* read *phonetic*.
- P. 42. Read *Which I mistrusted not. Farewell therefore Hero!*
- P. 51, l. 25. For *you* read *yow*.
- P. 72. Read *I beseech your Graces both to pardon me.*
- P. 85, last line. For *my* read *ny*. Rd. III, 1, 1, 84.
- P. 100. Read *Over my grave in camè damè Fame*.
- P. 101, l. 22. For *remains* read *remain*.
- P. 134, l. 5. For *in* read *is*.
- P. 165, l. 2. For *outweigh* read *outweighs*.
- P. 200, l. 18. Accent *sómwhíle*.^x

PREFACE.

It is not without misgivings that I make public this contribution to the study of English metric. Work in that field is beset with pitfalls of many kinds, and nowhere is the ground more treacherous than in that stretch of barren territory bounded by Chaucer and Wyatt. What I have done, however, I have done with the keenest sense of the futility of dogmatism, but with deep conviction of the soundness of the views I advance.

This study is the outgrowth of a paper read before the English Seminary of the Johns Hopkins University during the month of December, 1905. That paper treated of the versification of Sir Thomas Wyatt, and it was my original intention to confine the research to that one body of verse. As the work developed, however, the necessity for satisfactory knowledge of the antecedents of Wyatt's versification became more and more urgent, and a preliminary chapter was planned to satisfy the demand. That chapter has grown to the proportions of a dissertation, and the original theme of study has been relegated to a single chapter.

The first chapter is a brief statement of current opinion, not intended to be exhaustive, nor more than an adequate starting-point for the succeeding chapters.

The second chapter is an attempt to explain and to justify the extraordinary syllabic freedom of the Chaucerians by pointing out the comparatively unnoticed peculiarities of Chaucer's own line; by emphasizing the fact that the free line of the Tradition is an exaggeration of Chaucer's method rather than a break-down into doggerel or tumbling verse. In this chapter I have used freely Bright's theory of resolved stresses. Direct attack has been explained on a psychological basis, and the famous C-type of the decasyllable has been eliminated.

The third chapter elaborates the theory of secondary accent

and of quantity and pitch-accent for the articulative elements of speech, a thesis previously laid down by Bright and developed by his students in a series of monographs. My own contribution to this development has been almost altogether in the direction of the second part of the thesis. A psychological basis has been sought for the essential differences between octosyllable and decasyllable, and for this basis has been claimed an effect similar to that of emotional content and productive of the same metrical phenomena. The organic use of the two lines during the Tradition has been studied.

The fourth chapter is the outgrowth of my treatment of Wyatt's use of arsis-thesis variation, which was a part of the original nucleus of this dissertation. For the terminology, and for the incentive to investigate sources, but for nothing else, am I indebted to Melton's study of Donne, since I had tabulated the feature for Wyatt nearly one year before the appearance of the work on Donne.

Little was left for the fifth chapter but to emphasize Wyatt's use of the obsolete *e* and to illustrate fully his method of arsis-thesis variation. These things, and his other affiliations with the verse of the Tradition, have been pointed out.

In closing this Preface, it gives me great pleasure to record my indebtedness and to express my thanks to those who have, in one way or another, helped me in this work and otherwise: To Professors Bright, Browne, Griffin, Greene, and Wood; to Associate Professors Armstrong, Ogden, and Brush; to Doctors Kurrelmeyer and Ramsay; to Professors Marden and Stratton for valuable references; to Doctor Ramsay for the use of unpublished manuscript. My greatest obligations are to Professor Bright, who suggested the subject of this study, whose ideas I have adopted as the basis of a portion of my work, whose patient and suggestive criticism has helped me over rough places, and whose sound and exacting scholarship has been my inspiration.

A. H. L.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY,
May 1, 1907.

CHAPTER I.

CURRENT IDEAS OF THE METRIC OF THE CHAUCERIAN TRADITION.

Abuse of the period of English Literature between Chaucer and Wyatt has become one of the traditions of literary criticism, and, in a certain sense, perhaps no period has more richly deserved that abuse. Unlike other comparatively sterile times, the Transition Period fails to offer a single work of supreme merit either in prose or in poetry, and any study of the age must content itself with individuals of mediocre ability and with works conspicuous more for their volume than for their excellence. Prose, it is true, showed signs of vigor and promise; the great literary substratum of ballad, miracle, and morality was creative, and worthy in its degree; but in that sphere where literary achievement normally reaches its finest flower, in the court poetry, there is an astonishing lack of progress and an almost complete absence of higher inspiration. It is, perhaps, going too far to say, as one writer has said, that the period "at its worst represents the lowest depth to which English poetry has ever fallen."¹ English verse did not retrograde after Gower and Chaucer; it became paralyzed and stood still. Chaucer belongs to that type of genius which dwarfs contemporaries. The student travels sedately along the very level plain of pre-Chaucerian verse and finds himself suddenly confronted by a hill of strength for whose heights he has been entirely unprepared. Beyond the peak the plain resumes its level, now doubly monotonous by contrast. Post-Chaucerian verse is a series of formal exercises inspired and sustained by imitation of the great master. From Lydgate to Hawes the influence of Chaucer is pre-eminent, and the period has appro-

¹ A. W. Pollard, *Chambers's Cyclopædia of English Literature*, Vol. I, 76.

priately been called the time of the Chaucerian Tradition.² For over a century the poets with one voice profess their allegiance to the master; but the mighty forces that inspired him are conspicuously absent in his disciples. The spirit of Humanism, the Italian-born fire that was sweeping the Continent, went out, for England, in Chaucer, and was not rekindled until Wyatt. The literary canons of the Middle Ages govern Lydgate, Occleve, and Hawes. The tradition of content is distinctly medieval until Wyatt.

So much for the flesh of poetry; but what of its bones? Here a real problem is confronted. If the content of the verse of the Tradition has been damned with faint praise, its form has met a worse fate. Scholars are here unanimous in their abuse, and nobody is spared, not even Chaucer himself. It is usually agreed that, in their discipleship to Chaucer, the poets attempted to perpetuate the form of his verse with even less success than they duplicated its content. The conventional explanation of this failure bases it upon linguistic changes, especially upon the chaos of the final *e*. Lydgate, Occleve, and Hawes, it is said, did not understand what Chaucer had been doing; failed to fathom the mystery of his versification; and, with the entire English language tumbling into ruins about them, wrote lines suitable to the general confusion. In this vein one critic remarks, "The discipline of form in the treatment of the octasyllabic and heroic couplets and of the stanza . . . was a heritage of rich import. It produced . . . no immediate results of positive value; but negatively it stayed, at a time when the language was in a dangerously unsettled condition, a return to the rags and tatters of an outworn day." "Lydgate's rhythm," says the same writer, "is imperfect, but historically interesting as showing how the poet tried to catch the flow of the French metre and too often fell back on the jiggling beats of the popular tumbling verse."³

² C. Gregory Smith, *The Transition Period*, Chap. I, 4.

³ Cf. Smith, *The Transition Period*, pp. 5, 13. Schipper (*Metrik* I, § 196) and Schick (*Temple of Glas*, LVI) both have a better opinion of Lydgate's verse.

ten Brink says: "Lydgate had a quick perception for verbal and musical harmony, such as is seen in the simple, old-fashioned rhythms and melodies. But he never fathomed the secret of the charm that hovers over Chaucer's verses, and was never able to attain that freedom and security of movement whose bounds were so artistically drawn. He never understood, or at least never appropriated, even the elementary principles of Chaucer's verse, namely, that blending of the rigorous enumeration of syllables of romantic poetry with that melody of rhythm so pleasing to the English ear."⁴ Another scholar speaks of the Monk of Bury's absolute failure to grasp the elementary principle of the music of the decasyllable, and adds that "save as specimens of language all his poems are dead, and it is waste of space to speak of them." The writer picks out the *London Lyckpenny* as "Lydgate's one bit of real life, poetry of a very low order, but with vigour and swing in it."⁵ As the finishing touch to this sweeping judgment, comes the entertaining comment of Saintsbury, who speaks of Lydgate's "fecund but flaccid voluminousness"; of "his form, incurable, intolerable, hopelessly characteristic of a doggerel poet without a sensitive ear for rhythm"; of his "shambling metre and beggarly phrase"; of the "knock-kneed halting of his usual verse"; of the "five precious types (alluding to Schick's catalogue⁶) and that most precious of all the broken-backed C, which swarm and wriggle like crushed frogs"; of his "creaking discord"; and so on, *ad nauseam*, concluding with the sweeping assertion that Lydgate is "a doggerel poet" who "cannot be trusted to write three decent lines running."⁷ All this of the author of *The Complaint of the Black Knight*, long included among the works of Chaucer!

Oceleve meets with a somewhat better fate. ten Brink

⁴ ten Brink, *History of English Literature* II, Part 1, p. 223.

⁵ Pollard, *Chambers's Cyclopædia*, Vol. I, 79. Cf. *Anglia* XX, 404 ff. as to the authorship of this poem.

⁶ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, p. lvii.

⁷ George Saintsbury, *History English Prosody* I, 219 ff., and 290.

thinks the work of Lydgate was "far outdone by the London writer, who breathed the same air as his master and who had used almost the same speech from birth. The more arid Occleve goes securely on his way, and we read his verses with a quiet pleasure; Lydgate, endowed by nature with a much more musical soul, appears to stumble every moment, so that in reading him we feel again and again as if thrown out of the saddle."⁸ On the other hand, Smith finds the Londoner "in the matter of technique in many respects inferior to the maculate Lydgate; for, though his metre shows considerable ease, it is marred by wanton accentuation." The "small pleasure in his jolting verse" is offset by the "pathological interest of the inability of the changing medium to yield the music of which Chaucer, in rather happier circumstances and by dint of genius, proved himself the master."⁹ Saintsbury is no more sympathetic. "Occleve," says he, "did his best to get ten syllables into each line. . . . By using or rejecting the *e* as he chooses, and by making any syllable long or short, as he chooses likewise, with further liberties as to elision or synæresis he does, as a rule, manage to get his tale of syllables correct. But to any poetical or even decently rhythmical effect his verse is almost wholly a stranger."¹⁰

Hawes's lines fare no better at the hands of the critics. ten Brink, kinder than the others, after characterizing Hawes as a "belated child of the Middle Ages," acknowledges that he "shows an undoubted talent for versification, yet, like other poets of his day, he was troubled by the struggle between the rigidity of scholastic tradition and the progressive development of the language."¹¹ This temperate judgment is finely offset by that of Saintsbury, who, in a frenzy of critical indignation, points out Hawes as "the capital, and, in a sense, final example of this strange *debâcle* of the forces of English poetry

⁸ ten Brink, *History English Literature* II, 1, 223.

⁹ Smith, *Transition Period*, p. 17.

¹⁰ Saintsbury, *History English Prosody* I, 232.

¹¹ ten Brink, *History English Literature* II, 2, 93, 98.

from the formal and metrical point of view. . . . The rules of his verse still appear to be not proved by but made up of exceptions." The *Pastime of Pleasure* is characterized as "in the most dishevelled, out-at-heel, and generally slatternly condition, as regards metre and almost all the constituents of prosody in the wide sense."¹²

Skelton and the Scottish Chaucerians need not detain us. The first mentioned represents distinctively the breaking away from the Chaucerian Tradition. The northern followers of Chaucer undoubtedly kept alive the poetic fire, and show a comparative smoothness in versification. For that reason they do not concern this study, which will confine itself to the problem of the verse of the South.

An explanation of the troubled state of affairs in the metric of the Chaucerian Tradition is not lacking. Saintsbury, it is true, frankly acknowledges, in his most recent comment on the metrical phenomena of the period, that he "gives up as hopeless the assignment of any thoroughly satisfactory reason for this chaos, except the supposition, which is indeed all but a certainty, that English pronunciation had got itself into a hopeless muddle. A further supposition," says he, "may be the tendency to doggerel at worst, to extremely free and slurring measures at best, which we notice throughout the time."¹³ The critic is not so uncertain in a statement made in 1901, when he said: "For some generations . . . English versification and English pronunciation, owing mainly to the loss of value of the final *e*, but also to other causes, had been getting completely out of gear with each other, the difficulty being aggravated by the fact that practically every poet endeavored to keep Chaucer's prosody while he could not wholly and perhaps could not at all keep grip of Chaucer's word-system. . . . Every day the difficulty was getting greater, yet every day the attachment to Chaucer was increasing."¹⁴ This is practically

¹² Saintsbury, *History English Prosody* I, 235 ff., 237.

¹³ *Ibid.* I, 236.

¹⁴ Saintsbury, *The Earlier Renaissance*, pp. 267, 268.

the whole argument of the traditional school of criticism. Thus Pollard: "Lydgate and Hoccleve took from Chaucer as much of his machinery as they could carry, and wrote in his metres with the aid of ears sadly confused by the rapidly weakening pronunciation of final *e* and *es*."¹⁵ Smith remarks of the latter part of the period: "Verse technique was in a perilous condition amid the confusion of a changing pronunciation, of varied accentual values, of renewed experiments in the discredited alliteration, and of uncertain practice in the more honored decasyllable."¹⁶ Saintsbury states that the failure was due to linguistic changes that Chaucer could not have foreseen, changes in inflexion, in accentuation, in word-production, in short to the various transitional phenomena of the fifteenth century. He concludes that both orthography and orthoepy were, in the English of the time, at such a point of transition and blending and experiment that they gave no solid basis at all and that the materials crumbled in the hands of the builders as he used them.¹⁷

Along with this assumption that Lydgate, Occleve, Hawes, and their contemporaries did not know their own tongue, goes the statement that they could not read Chaucer properly. "If they did not misread Lydgate," says one scholar of the later poets of the school, "they certainly misread their Chaucer, and even where they did not misread him they misapplied what they read."¹⁸ Pollard reminds us that "Chaucer himself, with a poet's instinct, had probably been slightly archaic in matters of pronunciation and gramamtical inflection. During the fifteenth century the final *e* was largely disused, and the struggles of poets who took Chaucer as their model under these changed conditions are truly pitiable. . . . It seems possible that through the dropping of final *e* many later writers misread the decasyllables altogether and regarded Chaucer's heroic coup-

¹⁵ Pollard, *Prose and Poetry of the Fifteenth Century*, Int.

¹⁶ Smith, *The Transition Period*, p. 30.

¹⁷ Saintsbury, *History English Prosody* I, 292, 239.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 239.

lets as only a new variety of the old octasyllable, to be read with four beats and hasty slurring of any inconvenient syllables.”¹⁹ Skeat is of the same opinion and says: “It may be doubted whether toward the middle of the fifteenth century there were any readers left who knew how to scan Chaucer’s line properly.”²⁰ “Chaucer,” says another, “came too early, and when the process of attrition [in the language] had not gone on long enough. . . . Chaucer by main force and gigantic dead-lift of individual genius had got the still imperfectly adjusted materials of English into a shape sufficient for architecture of permanent and beautiful design. But when this force and this skill were taken away, the rough-edged or crumbling materials of language, the not fully organized devices of grammar and metre, were insufficient to make anything but more or less shapeless heaps.”²¹ The result is “disorganization, almost disbandment.”²²

It is useless to multiply examples of such criticism; the verdict is unanimous and unmerciful. The one concession is made by Pollard, and that, too, with reference more to content than to form. He says: “These sweeping generalizations which condemn whole centuries have been largely made for us by popular opinion, and, like all generalizations, they have to be very considerably whittled down as soon as we descend to particulars.”²³ The phrase “popular opinion” hits near the truth in the case of criticism of the versification of the Chaucerian Tradition. It becomes more and more obvious to the student of this unique metric that certain heresies have been handed down from scholar to scholar; that certain conventional tests have been applied by each investigator in turn, and that, for this very reason, the results have been uniform. The student reads that the final *e* disappeared at such and such a time, and he accord-

¹⁹ Pollard, *Chambers’s Cyclopædia*, I, 76.

²⁰ Skeat, *The Chaucer Canon*, p. 5 ff.

²¹ Saintsbury, *The Earlier Renaissance*, pp. 234, 235.

²² Saintsbury, *History English Prosody* I, 232.

²³ Pollard, *Prose and Poetry of the Fifteenth Century*, Introduction.

ing expects to find it lacking, and does so find it, in manuscripts and prints of that period, forgetting that the majority of existing manuscripts are from the hands of more or less careless scribes and written in a linguistic tradition different from that which saw the birth of their originals. It is assumed, too, that our modern ideas of accent were perfectly familiar to the poets of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and any deviation from that standard is denounced as a "wrenched accent." The student thus attempts to fit Tennyson's coat to Lydgate's back, and is horrified to find the Monk of Bury bursting through in some places and not filling his allotted space in others.

A little consideration of the facts would rapidly get rid of these judgments. It is surprising to hear of those ancient terrors, the final *e* and *es*, when everybody knows how Shakespeare made use of both convenient syllables.²⁴ Yet they are not permitted to Hawes, who comes a century earlier, nor to Wyatt, the last survivor of the Chaucerian Tradition and the pioneer of the new era.²⁵ Modern critical editors have, it is true, found out that the final *e* persists throughout the period; but even they are a little miserly in their concessions, and small wonder, when the only thanks they get for their pains is the old derisive cry, "Procrustians!"

The heresy in the matter of accent is even worse. Has the language stood still for four hundred years? "It is obvious," says Dr. Miller, "that the extent to which a poet avails himself of the accentual possibilities of his language will depend upon his period. . . . After the personal equation has been eliminated, we observe a continuous change in the language, which makes inevitable the great difference in accentual freedom between Chaucer and Wyatt, Shakespeare and Dryden. Each period shows a noticeable decrease in accentual flexibility, a hardening into fixed forms from which even the poet feels less and

²⁴ Van Dam and Stoffel, *William Shakespeare, Prosody and Text*, Leyden, 1900, p. 17.

²⁵ Cf. Chapter V.

less able to free himself.”²⁶ Dr. Miller’s own work shows the persistence of a certain degree of accentual flexibility into the most modern verse.

With a troublesome *e* that seems to settle itself permanently only in the early seventeenth century, and a flexibility of accent that, for verse at least, still offers its services to the poet, the two great arguments of the critics vanish into thin air. It is not to be considered for one moment that Lydgate, Occleve, Hawes, and the lesser lights did not understand their own tongue. Such an assumption is preposterous. Granted that the final *e* was bothersome; that grammar and syntax were not yet quite permanent; that the strong French influence still gave a Romance tinge to many words;—all this could not possibly confuse the ears of men who best represent the learning of the day. The assumption of lack of comprehension cannot stand on the foundation of mere surmise, and we must look further for the cause of the peculiar metric of the Chaucerians.

The conviction is irresistible that the versification of the Tradition is not a misapprehension but an exaggeration of Chaucer’s system. It is obvious to the careful reader that the much abused disciples of the great poet wrote what were to them regular and dignified verses, and that they knew quite well what they were doing. Their modest protestations of inexpertness are purely conventional.²⁷ Even Chaucer could in one place disparage his own skill and in another roundly rate his scrivener for lack of that quality.²⁸ What they constantly aimed at was the Chaucerian scheme. That was the ideal, and, like other ideals, it was not realized. Everything turns on the answer to the question, Why? Convention replies, Because they did not understand Chaucer and were confused by the linguistic muddle. In this study the answer will be, Be-

²⁶ R. D. Miller, *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse*, Baltimore, 1904, p. 75.

²⁷ Cf. Schick, *Temple of Glas*, p. cxli ff.

²⁸ Cf. B 47, 48; *Fame* III, 1-10; *Troilus* v, 1870 ff.

cause they were not artistic enough to observe Chaucer's temperance in the use of archaisms, contractions and resolutions, secondary accents, Romance stresses; in short, because they handled Chaucer's artistic freedom of prosody and accent with neither intelligence nor good taste. They exaggerated his mannerisms, perpetuated and increased the frequency of his archaisms, added largely to the number of his prosodical liberties, using them with little skill, and supplemented the dignified flow of his decasyllable by the empty pomp of aureate diction. In general, one may say they loaded so much that was clumsy, artificial, and tawdry upon Chaucer's line that they completely obscured its beauty. The master's daring touches and skilful use of dangerous metrical devices became with them mere awkwardnesses. His faults they transmitted with the same fervor. They exaggerated their devotion, and perpetuated and fossilized a system of prosody already archaic. But there was method in this madness; a definite ideal was always in sight; everything is done in order, if not decently and according to modern taste; and it is the purest superficiality to dismiss this school as a failure to attain a standard and as a period of complete metrical chaos. The standard was there, false or not, and the period is not one of anarchy and confusion but of the strictest convention. There is almost nothing new, and the old is worn threadbare.

The average reader, of course, finds this verse rough and crude. He reads it with difficulty, and while in a few cases he can perceive faint indications of a certain striving after harmony, the poetry as a whole impresses him as extremely harsh and unmusical. He finds some lines too long and others too short; he finds the accents falling in the wrong places; there seems to be an almost complete lack of rhythm.

This state of mind is the result of two influences, both of which contribute to a misconception and misjudgment of the structure of the verse. In the first place, the reader is led astray by the content, and comes to an erroneous opinion in regard to the form. In the second place, he applies modern

and uncritical standards to a metric that belongs to an altogether unique school of form. Both of these mistakes must be considered.

It is undoubtedly true that if the difficult lines of the Tradition were the vehicle for profound thought or delicate imagery, their mechanical imperfections would be overlooked. Goethe knew this principle well when he said: "Nowadays technicalities are everything, and critics begin to torment themselves whether in a rhyme an *s* should be followed by an *s* and not an *s* by *ss*. If I were young and bold enough, I would purposely offend against all these technical whims. I would employ alliteration, assonance, false rhyme, and anything else that came into my head; but I would keep the main point in view, and endeavor to say such good things that every one should be tempted to read them and to learn them by heart."²⁹ Few poets dare run this risk. Any failure or peculiarity of structure inevitably reacts upon the content, and, in the same way and to the same degree, sterility of content or unusual roughness or vigor of expression is subtly connected with technique. Few poets have been able to argue or to reason in verse and at the same time leave on the ear an impression of smooth rhythm.³⁰ It is even more true that as content approaches mediocrity or the prosaic the structure itself of the verse seems to weaken and to totter.

Often the sins of the content are visited upon the form, when investigation shows that the latter has nothing to fear. Lewis offers an excellent illustration of this in his recent book on English verse.³¹ The parody of Wordsworth's line created in jest by Tennyson and Fitzgerald,

A Mr. Wilkinson, a clergyman,

²⁹ Cf. Ekermann's *Conversations of Goethe*, February 9, 1831. Quoted by Masson, *Milton* III, 112.

³⁰ Cf. R. MacDougall, *The Relation of Auditory Rhythm to Nervous Discharge*, *The Psychological Review*, IX, pp. 478, 479.

³¹ C. M. Lewis, *The Principles of English Verse*, New York, 1906, p. 23 ff.

they pronounced "the weakest Wordsworthian line imaginable." Lewis adds, "The feature that specially concerns us is the weakness of some of its stresses. The rhythm seems to gather itself together by a sort of consumptive effort on the syllables *Wilk* and *cler*; but after each of these it trails off into a breathless collapse. . . . When Young writes,

Dim miniature of greatness absolute,

no one thinks of weakness. The difference between this line and the foregoing is not so much in the aggregate strength of stresses as in the manner of distributing their strength and placing the weaker ones." The author admits that "the weakness of the parody is as much in the sense as in the sound." He is "not sure that noble words with exactly the same cadence might not sound fairly satisfactory. The truth is that we can never wholly dissociate sense from sound." This is eminently true. The real fact is that the weakness of the parody is *altogether* in the sense, and if the reader will allow the iambic movement to assert itself and not attempt to give the words the explosive prose stagger that Lewis insists on forcing upon them, this fact becomes at once apparent. In the first line the only stresses that do not fall on full primary accents are those on the syllables *son* and *man*, two elements that, in compounds as well as alone, have borne verse-stress in poetry from Anglo-Saxon times down to the present day. The weakness of the line is thus seen to consist altogether in the content. So, in a large part of the verse of the Tradition, the prosaic character of the content is connected in the mind of the reader with the form. The same peculiarities of form, if made the vehicle of teeming thought or poetic beauty, would not destroy but actually increase the charm. The "perplexing pleasure" that Smith finds in the metrical ease of *La Belle Dame sans Mercy*, the *Cuckoo and the Nightingale*, the *Flower and the Leaf*, and the *Assembly of Ladies*,³² and, he might have added, in the verse

³² C. George Smith, *The Transition Period*, p. 23.

of the Scottish Chaucerians, is not so perplexing after all. Metrical ease there is, without doubt, but no more than in much of Lydgate, Occleve, and Hawes. The secret of the perplexing pleasure lies in the fact that the real poetic spirit of these delightful verses catches up the lines themselves into the realm of genuine art and gives them a charm that is denied Hawes's tiresome grammatical definitions in *Rime Royal*, and Lydgate's endless platitudes.

It must be considered, too, if the bad syntax of some of the Chaucerians, notably Lydgate, and their constant recourse to the weak device of "padding" the lines with meaningless and unnecessary phrases³³ has not a good deal to do with the impression they make of crudeness and lack of rhythm.

The crux of the whole matter is now at hand. The second great cause of modern wholesale denunciation of the metric of the Tradition is the application of modern and uncritical standards to metrical forms that belong to an altogether different school. This criticism is marked by lack of consistency and even of accurate historical knowledge. Its first point of attack centers around the so-called "break-down" of the Chaucerian heroic line. The following passage may be taken as a type of this sort of criticism. I paraphrase: Chaucer's system of versification, though perfectly scientific, was artificial and necessarily provisional. It was not easily intelligible to the mass of his countrymen and, as the tradition of Anglo-Saxon rhythm was to measure solely by accent, it is natural that when English poets, using the new metre without completely comprehending its character, departed from the iambic type, their variations would mainly affect the number of syllables in the line. "And this is just what we find in practice," remarks the critic, triumphantly. "Chaucer's verse is sometimes redundant, sometimes defective in the number of syllables, though his aberrations from the fixed standard, which by his own admission³⁴

³³ A weakness that affected Chaucer himself. Cf. C. M. Hathaway, *Chaucer's Verse Tags*, JEGPh. v, 4, 476 ff.

³⁴ Such "admissions" are not to be taken seriously. Cf. Schick, EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, cxli ff.

arise from his attention having been directed to matter rather than to form, are comparatively rare in his late work." Redundancy, explained by the writer as due to the character of Anglo-Saxon alliterating verse, which allowed slurring of unimportant syllables, he thinks is contrary to the genius of the iambic, and can hardly be reckoned as a beauty. Truncation, or the use of direct attack, "can be due," he says, "to nothing but an imperfect ear or want of metrical skill. The blot in Chaucer doubtless proceeds from sense being attended to before sound."³⁵ In a word, this school of criticism calls no line an iambic decasyllable that does not contain ten exact syllables in the prose sense of that term, and excludes the methods, common to verse in all languages, of lengthening or shortening the line. This is the rigid standard by which Chaucer's lines and those of his disciples are to be measured.

The examples given of Lydgate's redundancy³⁶ reveal the shortcomings of this system. Of the five lines, one is perfectly regular,

A man to love to his confusion.

Another is made so by the simplest of resolutions, one still common in English metric:

So mych of reson was compast in hir hert.

A third is regularized by phonetic processes common from Chaucer to Shakespeare:³⁷

There saugh I also the sorow of Palamoun.

The other two lines,

*I found a wiket and entred in as fast,
Give unto Venus and to the deite,*

³⁵ Courthope, I, 326 ff.

³⁶ Courthope, I, 330.

³⁷ The personal pronoun has the sound of *y* and crasis takes place. (Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, p. 184). The other contraction is too well known to require explanation.

contain the easy resolutions *wiket* and *Venus*, both of which can be duplicated in Chaucer and in modern poetry.³⁸

The same critic scans the first fifteen lines of Lydgate's *Book of Thebes*, remarking, "This is the work of a disciple and imitator of Chaucer, but of one who did not understand either the grammatical or the rhythmical principles on which the master wrote. . . . The lines frequently want the number of syllables required to maintain the iambic movement; the metrical accent is thrown on syllables which have no tonic accent; the caesura is always monotonously made after the fourth syllable."³⁹ Of the fifteen lines thus held up as horrible examples, twelve scan with mathematical regularity.⁴⁰ The other three show the direct attack frequent in Chaucer's decasyllables and in all other English poetry.

Occleve satisfies the writer in the number of syllables, but "this success," we are told, "is obtained at the expense of accent, which is constantly thrown on weak places."⁴¹

Of a selection from Barclay it is said: "In order to compress these lines within the iambic movement it is clear that many syllables have to be swallowed up, especially before the caesura."⁴² The fourteen lines from the Fifth Eclogue thus condemned illustrate the absurdity of this idea of scansion. Five of them contain dissyllabic verbal forms in *-eth* which are made monosyllabic in Chaucer and everywhere else. Two demand syncopation of *e* in the *ed* of the past participle, a concession that no reasonable person will refuse to make. One is simplified by the common aphaeresis *what (i)s*. Another contains the common elision *sorow and*. Two are entirely regular without change of any kind. One is easily straightened out by the ordinary combination of a final liquid with a following vowel, *counceyll and*. This leaves the single unexplained line,

³⁸ Cf. Chapter II.

³⁹ Courthope, II, 88 ff.

⁴⁰ *briht* in l. 1 should, of course, be *brihtē*.

⁴¹ Courthope, I, 338.

⁴² Courthope, II, 88. Cf. I, 390.

Thy hose and cokers be broken at the knee,

of which the apparently redundant syllable in *cokers* represents another form of the resolution so frequent in the period. The unbiased reader is left to judge if it is quite fair to put the metric of the Tradition into such violent hands.

As interesting examples of what is to be expected from such methods, I add a few more illustrations of this scansion. The prosody and the rhythm of the following lines are criticised:

The soote seasoñ that bud and bloom forth brings.

The swift swallow pursúeth the flies smale.

Surrey, *Description of Spring.*

The first line of Surrey's *Epitaph on Clere*, with its effective use of direct attack,

Nórfolk sprung thee, Lambeth holds thee dead,

Courthope reads by expanding the first syllable into a dissyllable, thus: "*No-r* as in *fire* = *fi-er*." The fourth line of Surrey's *Of Sardanapalus* is read:

Did yield vánquisht for want of martial art.

"Surrey seems," says the writer, "purposely to have made the rhythm of this sonnet of a rugged character." Chaucer's habit of accenting the inchoative ending (cf. ten Brink's *Language and Metre*, § 178 (β)) does not seem to have occurred to him. The second line of Surrey's sonnet on Wyatt's Psalms is read by making *Darius* a tribrach:

Dǎrřūs of whose huge power all Asia rung.

Courthope explains that Surrey is here "following Chaucer." The passage cited (D 498) shows the rhyme *cúryús* : *Dáryús*. (Cf. B 3427 and B 3838). For the passages from Courthope see his *Hist. Eng. Poetry*, II, 92, 93.

The extremity of this doctrine of mathematical rigidity and

non-equivalence is reached by those critics who will not allow Chaucerian verse a regular iambic movement at all, even asserting that a ragged line of four beats is the true solution of the problem. In the days of black letter Chaucers this might have been pardoned; but there are modern heretics not a few. In 1815 Doctor Nott, editor of Wyatt and Surrey, proved, to his own satisfaction at least, that even Chaucer's lines are "rhythmical and not metrical"; that a large proportion cannot be read as iambic decasyllables without doing the utmost violence to the English language; that, when some lines appear pure iambic, this is the result of accident. He concludes that from Chaucer to Surrey all English poetry is more or less "tumbling."⁴³

Absurd as this opinion may seem, it has been advanced very recently by a French scholar, M. Legouis.⁴⁴ He gives numbers of examples of "trissyllabic feet" and other prosodic licenses in Chaucer's line. All these are common illustrations of the laws of resolution and contraction, and are based upon simple phonetic principles. Their interest for this study lies in the fact that such lines are supposed by the writer to indicate a tendency towards the four-beat or tumbling line. This idea is finally announced as follows:

"Plures heroici apud Chaucerum occurrunt qui ne scanduntur quidem iambice, nec in quinque partes dividuntur. Quotiescumque enim in locum iambi trochaeus prodit cui quidem non nulla caesura nullave pausa antevenit, iambicus rythmus deletur, e. g.:

Withouten hyre if it lay in his might.

Prol., 538.

And wel I woot as ye goon by the weye.

Prol., 771.

As greet as it were for an ale-stake.

Prol., 667.

⁴³ Nott, *Surrey and Wyatt*, I, cxl ff.

⁴⁴ Émile Legouis, *Quomodo Edmundus Spenserius ad Chaucerum se fingens in eclogis "The Shepheardes Calender" versum heroicum renovavit ac refecerit.* Paris, 1896.

The reule of Seint Maure or of Seint Beneit.

Prolog., 173.

quos versus, uno trochaeo admisso, iambicos ceterum dicere licet.
Sed a recte legentibus sic diuidentur:

- (a) Without / en hyre / if it lay / in his might.
- (b) And wel / I woot / as ye goon / by the weye.
- (c) As greet / as it were / for an al / e-stake.
- (d) The reule / of Seint Maure / or of Seint / Beneit.

versus *c* et *d* similes sunt ex parte iis *non* iambicis a Georgio Gascoigne supra laudatis. . . . Sic inter Chauceri heroicos plures *non* iambici inveniuntur.”⁴⁵

The conclusion indicates the extreme to which the accentual theory carries its disciples. Any variation, however slight, from the *modern* canons of syllabification or accent is sufficient to throw the line out of the iambic class and make it a “tumbling verse.”

The line of argument from this sort of doctrine is, of course, that, since Chaucer's lines are or seem to be four-beat verses, his disciples naturally took them to be such and wrote accordingly. Legouis says: “Chauceri plurimi versus etiam cum vere decasyllabici erant, decem habere syllabas non videntur.”⁴⁶ Guest, imbued with the same idea, conceives of “another kind of tumbling verse founded on the verse of five accents.”⁴⁷ As an example of this new species he cites *London Lyckpenny*, as fine a specimen of the *genuine* tumbling verse, built on the old octasyllable, as can be found anywhere, but never connected, even remotely, with the decasyllabic line. Pollard offers George Ashby's *Active Policy of a Prince* (1460?-1470?) as “illustrating with unusual clearness the process by which Chaucer's five-foot decasyllables were being converted into a ragged line

⁴⁵ Legouis, pp. 50, 51.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 69, 70.

⁴⁷ Guest, p. 533.

of four beats.”⁴⁸ Far from being “ragged,” the one hundred and thirty-one stanzas of the *Active Policy* and the fifty of *A Prisoner's Reflections*, by the same author, reel themselves off with something that approximates Chaucerian rhythm, and with a certain convincing air of method and of purpose. There is even a kind of metrical consistency in the use of the final *e* and in the placing of the accents; the syllabification is almost rigid, the lines seldom running over ten exact syllables and easily normalized when they do pass the syllabic limit. The tendency is far greater toward “syllable-counting” than toward the “ragged line.” The poet’s fondness for rolling polysyllables, as a weak substitute for real poetic merit, is amusing, perhaps, but does not make the lines less smooth. Nowhere is there chaos or raggedness. If this is an example of unusual clearness, what of those of a less convincing character?

The four-stress theory has been stated of late for Elizabethan times by Herford, who says: “We know that Chaucer’s heroic verse was felt by the Elizabethans, who had lost the tradition of his final syllabic *e*, as a line of irregular length. (Gascoigne, *Certain Notes of Instruction*, ed. Arber, p. 34). Many, perhaps most, verses in the *Canterbury Tales*, when read from the faulty sixteenth century texts without the syllabic *e*, become normal four-beat verses.”⁴⁹ This is all probably true; but the fact remains that, however misleading the black-letter Chaucers may have been, the scholars of the time were not altogether blind to their imperfections. Francis Thynne in his *Animadversions* (1598) says of the early editions of Caxton and Wynkyn de Worde, “Whiche three editions beinge verye imperfecte and corrupte occasioned my ffather . . . to seeke the argumente and correctione of Chaucers Woorkes, whiche he happily fynished; the same being, since that tyme, by often printinge

⁴⁸ Cf. *Chambers's Cyclopædia*, I, 80. The poem is published in EETS. Ext. Ser. 76.

⁴⁹ C. H. Herford, *The Shepheards Calender*, London, 1897, p. lxix; cf. *Academy*, No. 1262, p. 28.

much corrupted.”⁵⁰ Elsewhere Thynne refers to “oure carelesse and for the most parte unlerned printers of Englande,” and to the fact that the work of Chaucer was “not so well performed as yt ought to bee: so that of necessity bothe in matter, myter and meaninge, yt must needes gather corruptione, passinge throughe so manye handes, as the water dothe the further yt runneth from the pure founteyne.”⁵¹

A disputed line is the theme of an argument which shows that scansion was not altogether a matter of chance:

“In the next staffe,
 For myters moe then one or two,
 you teache us to reade,
 Myters they weare mo then one or two,

whiche, methinkethe, nedeth not. For the wearinge of their mytrs is included in these woordes, *And myters more then one or two*. Whiche wordes are curteyled for the verse his cause, that the same mighte kepe an equall proportion and decorum in the verse, whiche would be lengthened one foote or sillable moore than the other verses yf your readinge shoulde stande.”⁵² Thynne’s remark has this value, at least: it proves that Thynne was not accustomed to forcing a line of ten syllables into four feet, a thing quite possible under the accentual system, or “ragged four-beat” theory of scansion. Incidentally, it will not escape notice that he seems to make *weare* dissyllabic, a fact of interest to those who allow no syllabic value to final *e* in this period; I see no reason for preferring the syllabic use of *r*.

As a final example of the idea of the Chaucerian stanza in the sixteenth century, let Stanyhurst’s quotation stand.⁵³ If,

⁵⁰ EETS. 9, p. 56.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

⁵² Thynne, p. 51 ff.

⁵³ Stanyhurst’s *Tradition of Aeneid*, I-IV. (Arber’s *English Scholar’s Library*, No. 10.) See p. 6 of *Introduction*.

in 1582, people knew how to write a stanza so easily scannable, is it not reasonable to suppose that they knew how to scan the lines? The *Globe Edition* is scarcely more accurate, and no more easily readable than this stanza:

Thee owle eeke, which that hight Ascaphylo,
Hath after mee shrigh t al theese nightes two:
And God Mercurye, now of mee woful wreche
Thee soule gyde, and when thee list, yt feche.

Troilus, v, 319 ff.

Although the Elizabethan scansion of Chaucer's lines bears only indirectly on the question in hand, the facts stated above indicate the possibility of two opinions upon matters of this character. The sins of the printers, however, would not concern us, but for the fact that much misreading of the verse of the Tradition is directly chargeable to scribal errors. Fortunately, recent critical editions and studies have come to the rescue with texts in respectable condition, and the Chaucerians have at least a better hope of rescue from the horrors of tumbling verse. But the old cry of "ragged decasyllable" is still heard, and modern editors fail to put it down. Dr. Schick, whose edition of Lydgate's *Temple of Glas* ⁵⁴ has done much to put the Monk of Bury in a more favorable light, is, nevertheless, the author of heresy and schism in his "five precious types and that most precious of all, the broken-backed C." Given this monstrosity, your decasyllable is on the verge of dissolution.

Other critical editions reveal a surprising state of indecision, and all, with singular unanimity, follow the five precious types, not forgetting the most precious of all. Such generalities as the following appear:

"Many of Lydgate's lines scan in several different ways. I suggest, with all due deference, that as Lydgate broke nearly every rule of the Rime Royal, there is no reason for supposing

⁵⁴ EETS. Ext. Ser. 60.

that he kept to a five-beat measure. In fact the greater part of the *Secrees* could be scanned on a six-beat basis with little trouble by allowing a liberal use of the pause."⁵⁵ Why, one is tempted to ask, does the editor limit himself to six beats? Why not seven or eight, allowing himself, of course, in each case, a more and more "liberal use of the pause?"

Steele, in his edition of Lydgate's *Secrees of Old Philisoffres* (EETS. Ext. Ser. 66) warns students (p. xviii) that "its prosody is the weak point of Dr. Schick's work." This seemingly harsh judgment is borne out by Schick's opinion of the line,

In Wiltshire of England two priestes there were.

"There are," says he (p. lvi), "hundreds and thousands of such halting lines, which seem to have simply no metre at all." In the words of Saintsbury, "I wish no English poet had ever written a worse line than this." The line reads, of course, with entire regularity.

In Wiltshire óf Englónd two priestes there wére,

and inability to regard it and others like it as regular verses reveals lack of acquaintance with some of the common phenomena of English prosody in all the centuries, including our own. Yet the editor's classification of Lydgate's lines is accepted almost everywhere without question.

Another editor, whose connection with the quite extraordinary lines of the *Assembly of Gods* gives him better excuse, remarks of *all* of Lydgate's verse:

"If we take Chaucer's line as the standard of melody, it is probable that Lowell's estimate of Lydgate's verse, 'a barbarous jangle,' is the correct one, If we forego a fixed metre and read the lines with their natural accentuation, a fairly good rhythm is secured."⁵⁶

These quotations serve to show the necessity for some more

⁵⁵ EETS. Ext. Ser. 66, p. xix.

⁵⁶ Triggs, EETS. Ext. Ser. 69, p. xiv.

definite canon of judgment. At present there seems to be none. Each editor speaks quite independently of any standard save his own taste. It is proposed, then, to investigate some of the difficulties of the verse of the Tradition, and to suggest a remedy.

The charges against the versification of the period may be summarized thus:

- (1) The line is either redundant or defective.
- (2) The accent is without system, and opposed to modern ideas.
- (3) The lines tend to degenerate into tumbling verse or into ragged decasyllables; at best they represent mere syllable-counting.

All these charges, it is certain, rest upon two fundamental misconceptions: (1) in regard to the syllabification and (2) in regard to the accentuation or reading of the lines and the general purpose and intent of their structure. In the chapters that follow, these questions will be taken up in detail. It is proposed to show that a two-fold tradition, of syllabification and accent, based upon Chaucer and exaggerating the features of his system, governed the prosody of the Chaucerian Tradition; that this tradition does not represent anarchy or chaos, but stands for a serious and consistent, although inartistic, use of the Chaucerian canon; that Chaucer's disciples did not violate the principles of his prosody, but abused them by over-use; did not introduce new ideas into the metric, but wore the old threadbare.

CHAPTER II.

SYLLABIFICATION.

It is the purpose in this chapter to show that certain metrical devices employed by Chaucer for varying the monotonous succession of lines of ten exact syllables were used too freely by his successors, and that the result was an inartistic, free octosyllabic or decasyllabic line; but that, by legitimate methods of resolution and equivalence, it is always possible to scan it as regular verse; that it is neither tumbling verse nor bare counting of syllables; and that the licenses of the Chaucerian Tradition are found, in some degree of frequency, throughout all English poetry.

Since the question of the "break-down" concerns almost exclusively the pentameter line, the greater part of the following work has been based upon it; but the shorter line, as will be seen, has not been neglected.

The problem naturally concerns the redundant line and the defective line, and it has been dealt with under these two heads.

A. THE REDUNDANT LINE.

I. CHAUCER'S DECASYLLABLE.

Whatever the origin of the heroic line in English poetry,¹ it is undisputed that Chaucer once for all established its use, and that the form he gave to it was accepted then and is now as the norm. It is equally incontestable that many of the so-called licenses, or methods of varying the mathematical regularity of the decasyllable, which Chaucer indulged in were

¹ This question is discussed in R. M. Alden's *English Verse*, New York, 1904, p. 174 ff.

common to English, French, and Italian poetry long before he perpetuated them in his work. But the poet showed a fine discrimination in combining the native idea of verse with that of the Romance literatures. In Anglo-Saxon poetry and in its legitimate successor the rather free line of pre-Chaucerian times, groups of unaccented syllables were introduced between heavily accentuated beats with comparatively little attention to the phonetic value of the slurred elements. Nevertheless, definite principles of resolution and equivalence underlay even this apparently careless grouping, and these furnished a foundation for similar phenomena in the later metrical verse. But Chaucer had before him, too, French and Italian models, and seems to limit himself, in large measure, to the syllabic combinations of a softer tongue. Even here he had great liberty. The Italian hendecasyllable² could, for example, be easily extended to thirteen or more syllables and still be read as a five-foot line. Thus, in Sonnet cccxvii (cccxiii) of Petrarch, the first line of the second quatrain,

Tu, che vedi i miei mali indegni ed empi,

contains sixteen syllables, so that in reading it three elisions have to be made. French verse, although less flexible, shows similar tendencies. In both cases combinations are made according to definite phonetic laws, and mostly concern the regrouping of adjacent vocalic elements. Chaucer, in most cases, followed similar laws of English phonetic. ten Brink and Bischoff have shown the great extent to which the Father of English Poetry availed himself of the syllabic freedom of native and foreign models.³ But ten Brink and others of his school permit Chaucer only a certain amount of liberty, and, when a line seems to transgress the laws they have set up, it is cut down to fit scholarly notions or pieced out to fill an arbi-

² Cf. Alden, p. 178.

³ Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, §§ 256-272; Bischoff, *Englische Studien* xxiv, 353 ff., and xxv, 339 ff.

trarily determined space. When nothing of this sort can be done, the epic caesura is assumed in spite of the fact that the French sources with which Chaucer was familiar and from which his editors declare he borrowed the epic caesura⁴ do not employ that convenient makeshift,⁵ and that similar resolutions occur at other positions in the line. Apart from the fact that the rigid and characteristic French caesura has no parallel in English verse, it is remarkable that in every case the so-called epic caesura of Chaucer is an easily resolved syllable-group, usually disposed of by some simple phonetic process. Skeat refuses to make the simplest resolutions at the caesura, and ten Brink, refusing to admit Skeat's idea of the French caesura in Chaucer, was forced to the conclusion that a redundant syllable occurs there in "an extremely limited number of verses." He proposed to get rid of the difficulty by his favorite method of emendation. Skeat (*Oxford Chaucer*, Vol. vi, xcii) mentions the endings *-e*, *-ed*, *-el*, *-en*, *-er*, *-es* as those "almost invariably employed" at his so-called epic caesura. It is surprising that he did not at once see that these are of all terminations in the English language the most easily and frequently employed in resolution in verse at any position whatever in the line, and in common speech on all occasions. Schipper (*Metrik* I, 415) makes the same mistake. Both scholars seem to take for granted in English an organic caesura of the French type, a feature incompatible with English metric. Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 307 (3).

As a matter of fact, many words and word-groups in Chaucer, in the work of his disciples, and throughout English poetry, are easily arranged in classes governed by phonetic laws, which follow none of the more familiar rules of elision, contraction, etc., and yet as truly become involved in the resolved stresses of the line. The futile attempts to give these elements their precise value has given rise, not only to the anomalous feature

⁴ Cf. *The Oxford Chaucer*, Vol. vi, lxxxvi ff.; Schipper, *Metrik* I, 415 ff.; II, 24 ff.

⁵ Cf. Bischoff, *Englische Studien* xxv, 362 ff.

of an English epic caesura, but to a number of so-called "variations" in the iambic line,⁶ dignified by the pretty names of Tribach, Molossus, Cretic, Amphibrach, Bacchic, Paeon, Dochmiac, Epitrite, and other terms foreign to the simplicity of English metric. All these are in English verse really forms of resolved stress. It cannot be too strongly emphasized that the normal structure of the foot, as revealed by the verse-scheme, must be maintained under all circumstances. Otherwise there is metrical chaos.

II. SYLLABIC FREEDOM AND THE CHAUCERIANS.

Bischoff has made elaborate lists of the types of syllabic freedom employed by Chaucer.⁷ Thousands of cases are examined and classified, and the work furnishes an adequate basis for a pretty thorough knowledge of Chaucer's syllabification. Among other valuable services, he has examined over four thousand examples of the so-called epic caesura, and has found that in the majority of cases the phenomenon disappears on phonetic grounds. Most of the examples are mere matter of elision of the final *e*. The conclusion is that neither Chaucer nor his French models made use of the epic caesura.⁸ One is surprised, however, that even Bischoff, who is seriously concerned in reducing the Chaucerian line to normal pentameter, will in many cases refuse an obvious resolution. For example, he scans,

*Turne over th' leef and chese another tale.*⁹

A. 3177.

when the simple and common *o'er* makes the line regular, and is less open to question than the shortening he suggests.¹⁰

⁶ Cf. Mayor, *Modern English Metre*, § 13 ff. for a typical example of the method.

⁷ Cf. *Englische Studien* xxiv, 353 ff.; xxv, 339 ff.

⁸ *Ibid.* xxv, 397, 398.

⁹ *Ibid.* xxiv, 392.

¹⁰ *Eng. Stud.* xxiv, 391, 392.

Bischoff scans the line,

It am I fader, that in the salte see,

B. 1109.

by omitting the article, and reading,

It am I fader that in salte see.

This is altogether unnecessary. The word *fader* represents a stress resolved into two syllables, as do many similar words.

Examples of this character illustrate the matter under discussion. It has become the usual practice with those who scan Chaucer to resort to text emendation when an unusual resolution presents itself. Often, as we shall see, this is done in the face of the evidence of all known manuscripts. The frequency of such occurrences has led me to believe that there are words and word-groups, not usually admitted to the lists, but frequently used by Chaucer and his followers as equivalents of a single syllable. I have, accordingly, brought together groups of the more unusual forms, and by citing occurrences from Chaucer down to our own time, have tried to show that the apparent redundancies of the Chaucerians were not without precedent in their master, and have by no means entirely disappeared in more recent times.

A fact to be constantly kept in mind, however, is this: That what Chaucer used sparingly and with taste his immediate disciples used unsparingly and without taste; that his restrained freedom was exaggerated into something dangerously near lawlessness. The result was a free form of the octosyllable or decasyllable; a form much freer, very often, than Chaucer allowed himself, and one that might easily lead the uncritical reader into the belief that the Chaucerians had no conception of a regular metrical line. The fact that these lines become normal by assuming resolutions found in Chaucer and elsewhere is sufficient to set that judgment aside.

The term "free" line is, however, somewhat misleading. The extremely flexible decasyllable employed by the court poets

must be sharply separated from a line frequently called "loose pentameter," and found in some of the dramatic verse of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Brandl¹¹ regards the serious parts of Medwall's *Nature* in Rime Royal, all of Heywood's *Wether and Love*, all of Bale's *God's Promises*, *John Baptist*, and *King John* as written in this verse. Fischer takes the same view in reference to the portion of the *Four Elements* in Rime Royal.¹² Schipper has opposed these views,¹³ and Dr. Ramsay in his study of Skelton's *Magnificence*¹⁴ concludes that such lines belong to the four-stress verse popularly known as "tumbling." Ramsay distinguishes two types of the four-stress line; one from the octosyllable, the other from the heavy rhythm of the Piers Ploughman type. He classifies the serious passages in Brandl's "loose pentameter" as heavy four-stress lines, of the same kind as those of Spenser's *May* eclogue, and written with a confused idea of the Chaucerian metre. This is by no means impossible. At all events, such lines are distinct from the free decasyllable of the Chaucerian court poetry. Although both types are, in many instances, much freer in syllabification than the average line of Chaucer, the court poetry is easily scanned by the common methods of resolution and equivalence found less frequently everywhere in English poetry, whereas the dramatic verses can often be reduced by no means except the most violent and unprecedented slurring, sometimes not at all, and are read with much greater ease as four-stress lines. In the matter of caesura, too, the types differ, the court poetry showing comparative freedom; the dramatic poetry, rigidity. When the two widely different purposes for which the two types were written are considered, the looser syllabification and the rigidly placed caesura of the one are as much

¹¹ Cf. *Quellen und Forschungen* 80, XXXVII, LII, LX.

¹² Julius Fischer, *Das Interlude of the Four Elements* (Marburger Studien zur englischen Philologie, Heft 5), Marburg, 1903, p. 29.

¹³ Cf. *Metrik* I, 231 ff.; *Grundriss*, 101 ff.

¹⁴ R. L. Ramsay, *Magnificence, A Moral Play by John Skelton*, EETS. Ext. Ser. 98. Cf. p. li ff.

to be expected as the more careful syllabification and the more formal and measured progress of the other. The same distinction prevails in modern verse between the purely literary and the dramatic forms. It is well illustrated in the vastly different lines, both presumably pentameter, of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* and of his plays. The only court poetry of the Tradition that approaches dramatic license is the *Assembly of the Gods*. Its verse differs from all the rest of Lydgate's work, and even more widely from the smoothness of Occleve and Hawes.

In his study of *Reson and Sensuallyte* (EETS., Ext. Ser. 89, p. 2), Dr. Sieper remarks, not very aptly, as I think, "If this poem is really Lydgate's, which I very much doubt, it can be said quite as truly that the monk knew how to conceal his peculiarities as scarcely any other poet could." On the other hand, the authority for Lydgate's authorship is not to be taken lightly. Dr. Triggs sums it up in his edition of the *Assembly* (EETS., Ext. Ser. 69, p. xi). I see no reason why Lydgate should not have deliberately chosen the four-stress line of the dramatic verse. Certain passages of the *Assembly* (Stanzas 90-102) are unmistakably four-stressed, and much of the rest of the poem can be made pentameter only with great difficulty. Nevertheless, it is not the same verse as the genuine long alliterating line of *The Tale of The Lady Prioress and her Three Suitors*. (Percy Society II, 107 ff.)

We return, then, to our first conclusion, that the verse of the Chaucerian Tradition has metrical regularity. Modern ideas of syllabification make it difficult to believe that freedom could ever have been carried to such excess; but it becomes evident on investigation that the canon of the period was quite peculiar to that time, and that Chaucer's followers, misled, perhaps, by his own skilful prosody, purposely and consciously allowed themselves far greater freedom in syllabification than Chaucer knew or than is known to-day. Yet they introduced no new idea; they merely exaggerated a system already in force. Saintsbury vaguely suggests this when he states his belief that Chaucer made use of equivalence to only a limited degree, and

that the Chaucerians may have had in mind more than the ten-syllable line.¹⁵ Not more, I should say, but a freer syllabification in that line.

One is prepared for skepticism here. In modern times, when printing has almost done away with recited verse, it is difficult to conceive of the effects that were slurred into regularity when the lines were read aloud and written with the spoken values in mind. Modern dramatic verse furnishes, however, a striking analogue. On the lips of the good actor the heroic line of the dramatist takes on great flexibility without losing its ten-syllable iambic rhythm. Shakespeare has lines that Lydgate himself might have written, so free is their syllabification.¹⁶ The transference to purely literary verse of these common phonetic processes of everyday speech is tabooed in modern times; but it is quite possible that after Chaucer, and even in some of his own verses, the popular diction crept into the heroic line.¹⁷ That this took place without system I am not prepared to believe. The forms group themselves with too much consistency to permit any such conclusion.

III. CHAUCER'S LINES AS THE CHAUCERIANS KNEW THEM.

It becomes necessary, here, to call attention to a fact too often overlooked, the fact that Chaucer's lines as his disciples knew them from too often carelessly made copies were not so smooth as our excellent modern editions make them. The slightest acquaintance with manuscript readings reveals this. It has long been the wise custom of Chaucer's editors to smooth the lines into perfectly readable shape by the addition or subtraction of obviously omitted or added words, for which the scribe has invariably been made responsible. No one, however interested in the pathology of verse he may be, could object to this means of legitimate restoration; but when manuscripts are

¹⁵ Cf. *History of English Prosody* I, 294 ff.

¹⁶ Cf. Abbott, and Van Dam and Stoffel.

¹⁷ Cf. Morley, *English Writers* VIII, 64 ff.

unanimous in giving what is known as a "bad line," the danger of Procrustean methods becomes apparent. No doubt this is convenient, but it assuredly does not consist with critical methods. To alter lines into modern smoothness merely because "only violent slurring could reduce to the correct number of syllables," and because "the majority may be easily amended"¹⁸ is merely dodging the difficulty. The "easy emendations," too, undoubtedly give greater smoothness, to the modern ear, but some of them appear altogether unwarranted. For example, *Blaunche* 101 reads,

So whan this lady coude heere no word.

ten Brink proposes to read it,

So whan she koude heere no worde.

Is it likely that any scribe, however careless, would have, deliberately or otherwise, changed the simple *she* to *this lady*? The same scholar suggests altering *Blaunche* 136,

Go bet quod Juno to Morpheus,

by the substitution of *she* for *Juno*, when such a change is not only unwarranted but actually unnecessary for the scansion, the rime being *thus*: *Morpheus* and *Morpheus* dissyllabic, not trisyllabic as ten Brink marks it. The identical rime appears in *Blaunche* 465, 466. Other changes, made in the face of the strongest evidence of the manuscripts, are those of *Allas* to *A* in *Blaunche* 213,

And saw noght. Allas! quod she for sorwe,

a change for which there is no metrical reason, and the deletion of *quene* in *Blaunche* 264,

As did the goddesse quene Alcyone.

The *House of Fame* shows a number of lines supported by all

¹⁸ Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre* § 300, note. The examples that immediately follow are taken from the same paragraph.

the manuscripts and yet altered by the editors to suit modern ears. Notable examples are II, 110, 113; III, 715, 731, 817-819, 886, 931, 963. Two points worthy of note seem to emerge from these facts: First, that the unanimous verdict of the manuscripts indicates pretty clearly the correct reading of the disputed lines as the Chaucerians must have known them. Secondly, that the rather free construction of a very large number of such lines must have made upon the poets of the Tradition an impression of much greater syllabic liberty than it is possible for modern canons of taste, refined by the centuries, to allow. Both facts are noteworthy when judging the prosodic freedom of the Chaucerian Tradition.

It is important to keep in mind, too, that the works of Chaucer that seem to have had most influence upon the poets of the Tradition are those that contain the greatest variety of syllabic freedom. It will be noted that a large number of Chaucer's lines cited as examples are taken from the *Romaunt of the Rose*, the *Dethe of Blaunche the Duchesse*, and the *House of Fame*, three poems noted for the difficulties of their prosody. The selection is made advisedly. The three poems are precisely those that seem to have had the greatest influence upon Chaucer's followers. Their medieval and allegorical character is sufficient explanation. Here in their master the Chaucerians found the whole machinery of the poetry of the Middle Ages ready at hand. Lydgate not only owed the inspiration for his *Complaint of the Black Knight* to the *Dethe of Blaunche* and to the *Romaunt*, but drew upon them for phraseology itself.¹⁹ Skeat has shown that Lydgate used Chaucer's version of the *Rose*, actually quoting from A.²⁰ The *Temple of Glas* depends largely upon the *House of Fame* and upon *Blaunche*, finding the title itself in the first.²¹ The *Temple* represents that pure allegorical side of the late Middle Ages that finds its best ex-

¹⁹ Cf. Krausser, *Anglia* XIX, 244, 245, 278 ff.

²⁰ Cf. *The Chaucer Canon*, pp. 72, 73.

²¹ Cf. Schick, *Temple of Glas*, cxxiii ff.

pression in the *Rose*. In the *Assembly of Gods* the influence of the *Rose* is still somewhat in evidence;²² the various devices of the complex allegory are all paralleled in *Blaunche* and in the *House of Fame*. In his *Pilgrimage of the Life of Man*, Lydgate is again, through Deguileville, brought into contact with the *Rose* material.²³ In the *Falls of Princes*, the *House of Fame* is often mentioned.²⁴ Apart from these specific instances, it is quite natural that poetry which harked back to medieval themes and models, and at the same time openly professed allegiance to Chaucer, should be most influenced by Chaucer's work in the medieval vein. It is not surprising, then, to find the features of the prosody of the *Romaunt of the Rose*, of the *Dethe of Blaunche*, and of the *Hous of Fame* perpetuated and exaggerated in the verse of the Tradition, and the liberties of Chaucer's octosyllable transferred to the decasyllable of his imitators. Although the peculiarities of Chaucer's prosody are by no means confined to the three poems mentioned, it is significant that the three most apt to have impressed themselves upon the Chaucerians are precisely the three that seem to present the greatest difficulties to the metrist.²⁵

The question of the authorship of the several fragments of the *Romaunt of the Rose* has little bearing upon our argument.²⁶ In the absence of any proof that the A-fragment was known to Chaucer's contemporaries and to his followers as the only part of the poem with which Chaucer had anything to do, except, possibly, the C-fragment, it may reasonably be supposed that the poets of the Tradition, at least, knew Chaucer as the author of the entire English version, and not merely of a portion of it.

²² Cf. Triggs, *Assembly*, XII.

²³ Cf. Locock, EETS. Ext. Ser. 92, IX.

²⁴ Cf. Koeppl, *Laurent de Premierfaits und Lydgates Bearbeitung von Boccaccios De Casibus Virorum Illustrium*, München, 1884.

²⁵ Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, §§ 299, 300.

²⁶ Cf. R. K. Root, *The Poetry of Chaucer*, Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1906. Chapter III discusses the question.

IV. RESOLUTION.

Resolution of stress is the key to most of the syllabic problems of English verse. It is unquestionably the secret of the mystery of the so-called "redundant" line of the Chaucerian Tradition. Its exaggerated use is the most striking and, perhaps, the ugliest feature of that line. No just appreciation of the prosody of the period can be had until the method of that resolution is fully understood and the extent of its vogue better known.

"In any regular meter, all the arses and all the theses, respectively, have the same value in time or duration, and in iambic and trochaic meter these time-values are represented by a syllable for each. But frequently two (or even three) syllables may be brought within the time-limits of the regular syllable in both arsis and thesis; and when this is done, the verse stress and the thesis respectively are said to be resolved into parts."²⁷ By a resolved stress, then, is meant one in which the force or intensity of the stress, in either thesis or arsis, is divided between two or among three closely related and adjacent syllabic elements without disturbing the temporal value of the metrical unit in which the resolution occurs. The stress may be divided between the syllabic elements in several ways, the division being normally determined by the relative value of the syllables under resolution and the position of the normal word-accents. The words *roses*, *quality*, and *beseech* illustrate some methods of distribution of the stress. Three methods may be tabulated:

(1) The stress is divided between a long and a short syllable, in which case the tonic syllable gets the greater part of the stress and the atonic syllable trails along as a mere light touch, a mere grace-note in the foot, yet essentially a part of the foot and receiving a small part of the stress under which it occurs. Example:

²⁷ For this definition I am indebted to Professor Bright.

In many *places* were nyghtyngales.

Rose, 657.

(2) The stress is divided between two or more syllables of almost equal value, one of them, however, having slightly greater length than the other or others. Example:

Havyng in her hand the palme of victory.

Assembly, 1174.

(3) The stress is evenly divided between two or among three syllabic elements of approximately the same value, each of them being equally stressed. The elements in this case are usually atonic monosyllables and it is usually the thesis that is resolved; less frequently the arsis. Examples:

For hym was levere have at ^x*his* beddés heed.

A 293.

I humbly *set it at* your will; but for my mistress.

Cymbeline, iv, 3, 13.

A phonetic basis, of course, underlies and makes possible the method of resolution, determining, as it does, the character and the grouping of the syllables.²⁸ In the following lists a phonetic classification has, to some extent, been followed, because resolution undoubtedly confines itself to certain groups with definite pronetic characteristics. However, the terms used are by no means to be taken in the old and confusing classic sense, and no syllable is ever to be supposed really to lose its entire value.

Resolution in the sense here used has much in common with the same term in Anglo-Saxon prosody, and yet must be dis-

²⁸ Cf. T. S. Omond, *English Metrists*, Oxford University Press, 1907, p. 220 ff. Omond is mistaken about Professor Bright's "rejection" of trisyllabic feet, and their reduction to dissyllables.

tinguished from that term. The specific differences are, as will be seen, the natural outcome of the regularizing process of substituting accurate time-values for the uneven rhythmical periods of the Anglo-Saxon line. In Anglo-Saxon poetry "the arsis, or rhythmical stress, requires a long syllable or the equivalent of a long syllable; this equivalent is called a resolved stress, and consists of two syllables, of which the first is short and the second is light enough to produce with it the metrical equivalent of a long syllable. The thesis, or unaccented part of the foot, consists of a varying number of unaccented syllables; in the thesis no distinction is made between long and short syllables."²⁹ The essential difference between this system and that of resolution in English metrical verse is not great. It concerns chiefly the thesis, which, in metrical verse, is regularized both as to the number of syllables and as to the time value.

Resolution plays the largest possible part in a line whose syllabic liberty still puzzles the metrist of classic tendencies. Unable to explain away so-called "hypermetrical" syllables by any device known to Greek, Latin, or Romance prosody, this student of English verse falls back upon classic substitution or equivalence, and the English line is made a mere hodge-podge of feet with classic features and classic names. The fruitful source of this confusion is the common mistake of the foot as the ultimate metrical unit in English scansion. Granted this fundamental heresy, inversions and substitutions follow as a matter of course, since nothing is either gained or lost when one independent foot-unit is substituted for another. In reality, the single foot of English verse is merely one of the articulations of the real metrical unit, the line, and gets its value from its position and function in that larger unit. As an articulative element, one of the joints, so to speak, of the line, it has a definite part to play, and that part is determined by the metrical scheme of the line itself. The larger unit lays down the pattern; the foot, the articulation, must conform to it.

²⁹ Cf. Bright's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, p. 229.

Conformity, however, it limited to general structural features and uniformity of time-value. The rigidly normal pattern for the foot of an iambic line is, for example, two syllabic elements, the first long, the second short; the first accented, the second unaccented. But the poet demands variety. He obtains it in a number of ways: for syllabification, by putting under either arsis or thesis not always one but often two and sometimes three syllabic elements. The stresses are resolved to cover the varying elements and the verse flows on without interruption of its rhythm and with no idea of changing the position or the intensity of its stresses. These remain intact, for only thus can the integrity of the real metrical unit, the line, be preserved. Variety is obtained, not by sacrificing the structure of the metrical unit, the line, but by clever manipulation of its stresses without changing their position; by discreet syllabic combinations within the articulations of the line, again without disturbing the normal recurrence of the stresses. This principle is in full accordance with the fact of the unbroken continuity of the line (in Anglo-Saxon the half-line) as the real metrical unit in English verse from its earliest forms to the present day, a continuity that the influence of foreign models has never been able to destroy.

The following list of instances of resolved stress illustrates the frequency of the phenomenon in Chaucer and the extent to which his disciples availed themselves of, and abused, that syllabic liberty. The more common devices of normalizing the long line have been omitted.³⁰

The examples are taken from Chaucer, Lydgate, Hawes, Shakespeare, and Milton. Emphasis has, of course, been laid upon Chaucer as the source of the prosody of the Tradition. Gower and Hoccleve, on account of their comparatively strict syllabification, do not appear. The modern poets are taken to show the continuity of syllabic freedom.

³⁰ ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, §§ 256-272, and Bischoff, *Englische Studien* xxiv, 353 ff., xxv, 339 ff., furnish abundant material for the study of these.

1. *Atonic vowels between dentals, under resolved stress.*

This is one of the commonest and most useful forms of resolution, and seems to have been employed by Chaucer and his followers to an extent unknown in modern verse. It may be considered under two heads:

(a) Weak preterites and past participles under resolution.
(Cf. Bright's *Anglo-Saxon Reader*, § 97, note 2.)

CHAUCER furnishes a large number of examples, assimilation being sometimes indicated by the orthography; but this is far from being always the case.

But wikkidly he *guytte* her kyndenesse.

Legend 1918.

He *guytte* hym well his guerdon there.

Rose 1526.

In these lines, and in *Legend* 523, *Troilus* II, 242, *guytt* is from *guyted* < *guyten*. Other examples are: *astert*, A. 1592; *stert*, E 1060; *knytt*, B 3224; F 986; *y-stynt*, D 389.

The participle *depeynted* is trisyllabic in A. 2027, 2031, 2034, 2037; *Legend* 1025; *Rose* 478; *Blaunche* 322; *Troilus* v, 1599; but becomes dissyllabic in the line,

Though it were with thy fundement *depeint*.

C 950.

The cook *y-scalded* for al his longe ladel.

A 2020.

Thow hast *translatid* the Romauns of the Rose.³¹

Legend A. 255.

Cf. *wedded*, *Legend* 2609; *stikid*, *Rose* 1811; *voided*, *Rose* 2925; *turmented*, *Rose* 7092; *awayted*, *Rose* 7521.

³¹ With this line compare *Legend* B 330, which Bischoff reads, *Thou hast translatid th'Romaunce of the Rose*.

LYDGATE makes frequent use of the device. Examples are:

The lombe *unspotted* the grounde of Innocence.
Nightingale C. 185.

Upon his *blessed* shulder the crosse was born.
Ibid. 313.

A remarkable case occurs in *Assembly* 1188, wherein both *y* and *e* almost disappear in *vanysshed*. The line reads,

As they were *vanysshed* saw I $\overbrace{\text{never}}$ thyng with ey.

HAWES uses the resolved form frequently in the *Pastime*:

That them *exalted* to hye degre from lowe.
 122. 4.

With Flora *paynted* in many a sundry vayne.

Cf. blynded, 23. 17; depaynted, 43. 22; paynted, 103. 16; offended, 113. 24; redouted, 118, 24; exhorted, 155. 15; departed, 190. 15.

SHAKESPEARE is the best modern representative.

That *tended* upon my father I know not madam.
Lear II, 1, 97.

Which I *mistrusted* not farewell therefore Hero.
Much Ado II, 1, 189.

Is to be *frighted* $\overbrace{\text{out}}$ of fear and in that mood.
A and C. III, 13, 196.

Cf. fretted, *Cymb.* II, 4, 88; avoided, 1 *Henry IV.* v, 5, 13; executed, 1 *Henry VI.* II, 4, 91; etc.

MILTON has several lines that seem to come under this head, although other readings are possible in most cases. The lines are:

Created ^ˈhugest that swim the ocean stream.

PL. I, 202.

Confusedly ^ˈand which thus must ever fight.

PL. II, 914.

Departed ^ˈfrom thee and thou resemblest now.

PL. IV, 839.

And as I passed I *worshipped*: ^ˈIf those you seek.

Comus 302.

In the last line *worshipped* is practically monosyllabic.

(b) Various cases of resolved stress with atonic vowels between dentals.

The tendency everywhere is to reduce the value of the atonic vowel between dentals. Chaucer does not inflect the possessives of words in *s*,³² and this of itself shows the feeling. No doubt, too, the syncopation of unaccented *e* in plurals and verb forms³³ was instrumental in bringing it under resolved stress in the plurals of words ending in a dental sound, where the syncopation was neither so easy nor so common in speech.

CHAUCER'S use of the device is interesting, and shows what sort of example the Chaucerians had to follow:

Men speken of *romaunces* of prys.³⁴

B. 2087.

In many *places* were nyghtyngales.

Rose 657.

³² ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 229.

³³ For full list see Bischoff, in ES. XXIV, 381 ff.; xxv, 352 ff.

³⁴ ten Brink (*Language and Metre*, § 272) classifies this example as a case of "slurring." One manuscript, *Harleian*, has *romauns*.

In thilke *places* as they habiten.

Rose 660.

The word *roses* seems to have been used in this fashion to the greatest extent. Typical lines are:

For brode *roses* and open also.

Rose 1681.

Aboute the redè *roses* spryngyng.

Rose 1700.

Cf. *roses*, Rose 2278, 3017, 3073, 3943. Cf. *curteis*, Rose 2352; and, perhaps, *goddesse*, Blaunche 264 (all mss. have *quene*).

Similar to the cases just cited is that of the two words *this is*. Of this combination, which has monosyllabic value in a good many lines, ten Brink says (*Language and Metre*, § 271), "Aphaeresis of the vowel is followed by assimilation to the preceding word." This is possible, and the fact is indicated in some of Lydgate's lines and even in Chaucer. (Cf. E 56 where ms. E.² has *this* for *this is*.) But the more frequent occurrence of the words in separate form indicates the possibility of simple resolution. Note the examples:

We moste endure: *this is* the short and playn.

A 1091.

This is al and som he helde virginitee.

D 91.

But *this is* his talè which that ye may heere.

E 56.

The following examples, even if they be not Chaucer's, show the sort of thing the Chaucerians had as model: *absence*, Rose 2796; *acquaintance*, Rose 4704; *discordaunce*, Rose 4715; *pensyf*, Rose 2446. A final example shows unquestionably resolution.

Into this gardyne for foule or faire.

Rose 4072.

LYDGATE, as might have been expected, outdoes his master. The form *this is* is well represented. First we have cases where assimilation seems to be complete (cf. Chaucer E. 56, MS. E.²) and is so indicated:

Thýs to seyne in your werkyng.

Pil. 2701.

Thýs^x hé that háveth pléyn powér.

Pil. 3053.

In double party *thýs* no doute.

Pil. 2497.

There are, however, other lines where simple resolution is apparent.

This is al and some & chefe of my request.

Temple 496.

This is hé that drank galle and eysel I meynt.

This is hé that was afore Pilate atteynt.

Nightingale H, 137, 138.

Cases like the two that follow illustrate the usual resolution, and the second demonstrates the falsity of the "epic caesura" idea by showing resolution in non-caesural position:

We bring to *chyrches* of trouthe this is no tale.

HGS 144.

In *disshes* of gold a morsel agreable.

HGS 207.

Among the *bushes* me prively to shroude.

Complaint 147.

Cf. Musis, *Temple* 953; Jugis, *HGS.* 148; Citees, *Secrees* 171. The word *goddess* and its plural are often thus resolved as in,

To fore the *goddess* by lamentacioun.

Temple 198.

Cf. *Temple* 690, 1073. That resolution and not apocopation of the *e* of the definite article is intended here is shown by lines where apocope is impossible, such as,

Now blisful *goddess* doun fro thi sterri sete.

Temple 1100.

That bene *goddesses* of turment & of peyne.

Temple 960.

The atonic final vowel in words like *princes* is frequently slighted:³⁵

For prudent *princes* most digne of Reverence.

Secrees 33.

Beth ware ye *princes* your sogetis to despise.

HGS. 635.

The circumstauncis me list nat to defferre.

HGS. 411.

The word *Venus* is frequently shortened in Lydgate. The poet probably had good authority in Chaucer, who wrote,

This sely *Venus* nygh dreynt in teres mete.

Mars 88.

Lydgate writes:

O lady *Venus* so feire upon to se.

Complaint 619.

O ladi *Venus* consider now and se.

Temple 367.

³⁵ Cf. Schipper, *Metrik* I, 498, 501.

Other words are brought into this class:

Both ware of *Phebus* that erly cast his liht.

HGS 573.

A somewhat unusual resolution is found in the line,

O goodli *planet*, O ladi Venus bright.

Temple 835.

Forms of this character were extended to other words. The following line illustrates the extension:

I fond a *wiket* and entrid in as fast.

Temple 39.

HAWES is quite as free as Lydgate in this matter. Typical lines from the *Pastime* are:

In depured *verses* of crafty eloquence.

188. 2.

Of dyvers *spyces* I knewe not what it ment.

17. 7.

For lyke as *Phebus* above all sterres in lyght.

12. 11.

Other examples are vices, 15. 24; offyces, 108, 3; ryches, 174. 7; harneys, 10. 11; Eufrates, 17. 3; sentence, 39. 22; profytable, 53. 14; covetyse, 31. 17; covetous, 153. 6.

Thus the Chaucerians, having for models almost strictly dental resolutions, gradually extended the use to embrace other cases where the atonic vowel did not occur between dentals, or where only a single dental was present.

SHAKESPEARE represents the greatest freedom in this sort of resolution. He used the contracted form of the participle in *ed*; he seems to avoid the possessive and the plural in *s*, and those forms are frequently written and still more frequently pronounced without the additional syllable.³⁶ Striking lines are these:

³⁶ Cf. Abbott, §§ 341, 342, 471, 472.

I humbly *set it at* your will; but for my mistress.
Cymb. iv, 3, 13.

To his experienced tongue yea *let it* please both.
Troilus i, 3, 68.

The familiar contraction of *this is* appears often, as in

O *this is* the poison of deep grief it springs.
Hamlet iv, 5, 76.

Cf. *Lear* iv, 6, 187; v, 3, 282; *Shrew* iv, 4, 20; *Measure* v, 1, 131; *Tempest* iv, 1, 143; etc. The equally common resolution of words containing sibilants is found in a number of non-caesural positions:

Professes to *persuade* the *King* his *son's* *alíve*.
Tempest ii, 1, 236.

Nor when she *purposes* return. Beseech your highness.
Cymb. iv, 3, 15.

Other examples are: services, *Cor.* ii, 2, 231; carcasses, *Cor.* iii, 3, 122; horses, *Macbeth* ii, 4, 14; purposes, *A. and C.* v, 2, 339; purses, *Rd. II.* ii, 2, 130; appliances, *Measure* iii, 1, 89; conveyances, *Cor.* v, 1, 54; consequences, *Macbeth* v, 3, 5; senses, *Macbeth* i, 6, 3; Marcus, *Titus* iv, 3, 5.

MILTON has one line in *Comus* in which the atonic vowel of *Phoebus* gets little value:

To quench the drouth of *Phoebus* which as they taste.
Comus 66.

This line has been the cause of much comment on the part of the editors. Masson asks, "Will anyone venture to say that *Phoebus* is to be pronounced *Phoeb's*?" (*Masson* iii, 122). Bridges classifies the instance as a case of extra-metrical syl-

lable in the midst of the line, and explains that in *Paradise Lost* Milton disallowed the use of this syllable. He justifies its use here on the ground of the pause after it; in other words, he admits it as a case of the epic caesura.

2. Resolution or words in final ER, IR, UR, RE.

The underlying influence in all these resolutions is, of course, the development of syllabic *r*. It seems best to classify the entire group under the general head of resolution. Even in cases like *ever*, *other*, *whether*, the word is not monosyllabic (cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 263) and in the majority of cases the consonant element retains its value, and the instance is one of simple resolution.

CHAUCER furnishes numerous examples:

Withoute bake mete was *never* his hous.

A 343.

Cf. *ever*, A. 50; *Blaunche* 1080; *never*, *Blaunche* 38, 237, 562.

But we were *levere* than al this toun, quod he.

A 3751.

Cf. *levere*, F. 683; *Rose* 6168.

Turne *over* the leef and chese another tale.

A 3177.

Cf. B. 4581; F. 970; *Troilus* II, 781.

Various other resolutions are as follows: *ryver*, *Rose* 110; *sobre*, D 1902; *suffre*, *Rose* 4380; *somer*, A 394; *maner*, *Blaunche* 839; *moder*, B 276; *Rose* 5417; *fader*, B 1109; *weder*, *Rose* 4336; *beter*, *Blaunche* 844; *water*, A 400; *Rose* 121, 124; *alderbest*, *Blaunche* 87; *alderfayreste*, *Blaunche* 1049; *siker*, *Blaunche* 1019; *after*, A 525; D 1789; *Blaunche* 1104; *other*, *Blaunche* 822, 633; *nother*, *Blaunche* 342; *another*, *Rose* 7440; *neither*, *Rose* 6064, 6192; *whether*, *Blaunche* 347, 886; *whider*, *Fame* II, 94.

An interesting line shows the possibilities of this sort of resolution:

But hit may *never* the *rather* be do.
Blaunche 561.

The following lines seem to show an extension to plurals in s:

Of all hir *fetures* he shall take heede.
Rose 2813.

And so for *lovers* in her wenyng.
Rose 2766.

Avaunceth *lovers* in such manere.
Rose 2780.

LYDGATE follows Chaucer in this, as in other things, with more zeal than art. Examples are:

Off ffader *moder* thogh they be wyse.
Pil. 11209.

In honest *maner* withoute offencioun.
Temple 429.

Cf. *oder*, *Nightingale* C 206; *whedir*, HGS 151; *ordre*, HGS 98; *ysidre*, *Reson* 3623; *Gandre*, HGS 242; *mater*, *Temple* 1093; *sceptre*, *Reson* 1422, *fostre*, *Pil.* 3813; *othir*, *Temple* 1038; *Ector*, HGS 50; etc.

HAWES uses the resolution frequently in the *Pastime*. Examples are as follows:

What payne I *suffer* by great extremyte.
 98. 19.

In all due *maner* to be centencyous.
 48. 7.

Cf. *evermore*, 114. 5; *gyllofer*, 97. 11; *copper*, 15. 6; *maner*, 67. 16; 111. 14; *remember*, 71. 8; *lenger*, 92. 1; *matter*, 28. 25; 110. 20; *after*, 198. 13; 214. 24; *sweter*, 17. 2; *consyder*, 174. 3; *other*, 144. 19; *together*, 176. 12.

To this class also belong resolutions like *brodred*, 127. 25; *suffered*, 71, 10; *delyvered*, 145. 14.

SHAKESPEARE'S uses of the resolution have been classified by Abbott, see §§ 465, 466.

MILTON has a few lines that show the resolution. They all appear in *Comus*; Bridges says there is no case in *Paradise Lost* (cf. Bridges, p. 7).

Crams and blasphemes his *feeder*. Shall I go on?
Comus 779.

- I must not *suffer* this; yet 'tis but the lees.
Comus 809.

The above line is interesting because the resolution is *not* at the caesura.

Made Goddess of the *river*; still she retains.
Comus 842.

3. Resolution of words in final L, LE.

The following examples of this usage in CHAUCER will show what precedent the Chaucerians had to follow:

A *perilous* man of dede.
B 1999.

O *perilous* fyr that in the bedstraw bredeth.
E 1783.

And yet me lyst right *evel* to pleye.
Blaunche 239.

That at a *revel* whan that I see yon daunce.
Rosemounde 6.

But al in *ydel* for it availleth noght.
H 147.

That in the *castell* ther was a belle.
Blaunche 1321.

Cf. *cruel*, *Rose* 3252; *perill*, *Rose* 1884; *evel*, *Blaunche* 1203; *Rose* 2745, 4899; *ydelnesse*, *Blaunche* 1154; *castell*, *Rose* 5821; *candell*, *Rose* 3200; *litel*, *Rose* 4473; *noble*, *Blaunche* 435; *feblenesse*, *Fame* I, 24; etc.

The common use of the resolution again justifies us in omitting further examples. The point of importance is the resolution *before consonants* in Chaucer.

4. Resolution of words in final *N*, *M*, *NE*.

Like the resolution of words in *r*, the present case may be ascribed to the development of the nasal. Examples are as follows:

CHAUCER: Interesting examples of the possibilities of the resolution are these:

And I shall *loven* *sithen* that I wille.

Rose 3433.

Sithen men us *loven* comunably.

Rose 7235.

Other examples are: *hevene*, *B* 3409; *G* 96; *even*, *Blaunche* 198; *loven*, *Rose* 6001; *geven*, *Rose* 7100; *riban*, *Fame* III, 228; *yren*, *G* 827; *weren*, *A* 2924; *loren*, *Rose* 1740; *soleyn*, *Blaunche* 982; *wommen*, *E* 2273; *Rose* 4276, 5051; *wynnen*, *Rose* 6663; *vermyn*, *Rose* 2758; *yeman*, *G* 703; *mayden*, *B* 692; *festne*, *A* 195; *wondreden*, *F* 307; *diden*, *Rose* 7592; *bothun*, *Rose* 1790; *withouten*, *Rose* 2183, 3756; *gardyn*, *Rose*, 1348; *pesen*, *Legend* 648; *resoun*, *Blaunche* 1010; *passen*, *Rose* 2482; *faucon*, *Parlement* 337; *sadome*, *Rose* 1393, 4159; *bo-som*, *Troilus* II, 1155; *fantom*, *Fame* I, 11; *botme*, *Rose* 1557.

This resolution is so common that examples from the Chaucerians will be omitted. The use is frequent in Shakespeare, and even Milton has at least one unusual case in the line,

Out of such *prison* though *spirits* of purest light.

PL VI, 660.

The same feeling is manifest in the line,

Their *idolisms* traditions paradoxes.

PR IV, 234.

Such examples are to be distinguished from the usual instances where the following word begins with a vowel, as,

How dies the Serpent? He hath *eaten* and lives.

PL IX, 764.

Cf. *reason*, PL I, 248; VIII, 591; IX, 559. Even such cases were not approved of by the hypercritical Bentley, whose comments here, as elsewhere, are amusing.

5. *Romance words in LE and RE.*

Although these instances might have been grouped with the resolutions of words ending in liquids, there is enough difference in the use involved to justify a separate division. The following examples show how such words were used before consonants. Their conduct before words beginning with a vowel is familiar to all students of metric.

CHAUCER, in this, as in all other things of metric, offered to his followers a pretty free range, as these examples show:

And yet this *Manciple* sette hir aller cappe.

A 586.

A gentil *Maunciple* was ther of a temple.

A 567.

"No," quod the *Manciple*, "that were *()* greet mescheef."

H 76.

The last line Bischoff (*ES* xxv, 391) proposes to read,

"No," quod th' Manciple, "that were greet mescheef,"

a reading justified neither by the manuscript nor by necessity. The same refusal to accept facts is shown in Bischoff's scan-
sion of F 233. He would either resolve *writen* or, "besser,"
apocopate the *n*.³⁷ Neither is necessary, for the line runs,
smoothly enough,

And Aristotle that writen in hir lyves.

Cf. *constable*, B 521, 568, 575, 593, 724, 879; *agreable*, B 767;
mesurable, A 435; *peple*, A 2660.

The class of words in *re* is of equal interest. Bischoff again
(*Eng. Stud.* xxv, 392) refuses the obvious reading of *Troilus*
v, 1515, by omitting *that*; the line does not need emendation:

Fro Meleagre, that made the boor to blede.

This reading is amply supported, if it needs support, by the
following passages:

Ek Cleopatre with al thyn passioun.

Legend A 213.

And Cleopatre, with al thy passyoun.

Legend B 259.

Distempre yow noght ye be my confessour.

D 2195.

That ther nys *tygre* ne noon so crueel beest.

F 419.

And *moustre*; for be hit *never* so derke.

Blaunche 911.

Cf. *sobre*, D 1902; *attempre*, *Blaunche* 3416.

HAWES shows a decided tendency toward this use, a much
stronger tendency, indeed, than the earlier Chaucerians. A ty-
pical line from the *Pastime* is,

³⁷ Cf. Bischoff, *Eng. Stud.* xxv, 391.

Her noble connynge so that I myght descerne.

21. 21.

Cf. *noble*, 39. 20; *noblenesse*, 99. 17; *temple*, 18. 28; 90. 28; 119. 12; *chamberlayne*, 20. 6; *chamber*, 21. 11; *nombre*, 30. 28; *ordre*, 35. 22; *membre*, 107. 10; *fable*, 220. 7; etc.

With the settling down of the language into a more fixed and uniform pronunciation, and the passing away of strong French influence, this use of Romance forms would naturally die out. Nevertheless it persists to a limited extent, and even in MILTON at least one example in the strict pentameter of *Paradise Lost* offers itself to the metrist.

Innumerable before the Almighty's throne.

PL v, 585.

Bridges (p. 14) gives this as the only (?) case of *le* without elision; that is, the only use of this resolution; elsewhere words in *le* are followed by vowels. A line from *Comus*, however, indicates the tendency.

And earth's base built on *stubble*. But come let's on.

Comus 599.

It is easy enough to explain this as a case of epic caesura; but the etymology of the word and the early history of English metric are both in favor of my reading.

6. Resolution of the Past Participle of verbs in a final liquid.

This unusual resolution may be regarded as an extension of the resolution of words ending in a liquid or a nasal sound. This, we have seen, is very common. It is easy to understand how the ugly and uncommon resolution of the participle came about. The familiar resolution of stems of this class and that of other past participles would bring this to pass.

CHAUCER seems to offer no examples in his unquestioned work, but the *Rose* furnished several to the poets of the Tradition. Among them I find: *delyvered*, 2762; *tremblyde*, 3163; *enlumyned*, 5344; and, very probably from Chaucer's own pen, *engendred*, 6113.

LYDGATE has a few examples, among them: In *Nightingale c*, *suffered*, 315; *suffred*, 371; in *Nightingale H*, *sugred*, 5; in HIGS, *assembled*, 8; *remembryd*, 243; in *Temple*, *hindred*, 244.

7. *Resolution after development of liquid or nasal.*

An important group of resolutions is this. Whether the atonic vowel ever completely disappears or not is hard to determine; it probably remains as a very light touch.

CHAUCER'S use of the resolution is well known. It has been put into the class of the epic caesura or of *doppelte senkung*.³⁸ The best known examples are:

Wyd was his *parisshe* and houses fer asonder.

A 491.

Trille this pyn and he wol *vanysshe* anoon.

F 328.

Other examples not so well known but equally valuable for our purpose are as follows:

Swiche maner *necessaries* as been plesynges.

B 711.

And othere *necessaries* that sholde nede.

B 871.

Of *Paris* Eleyne and of Lavyne.

Blaunche 331.

And *Phyllis* also for Demophon.

Blaunche 727.

³⁸ Cf. Schipper, *Metrik* I, 464.

The non-Chaucerian portion of the *Rose* shows several cases of the resolution:

He *vanyshide* away all sodeynly.
Rose 2954.

And *norisheth* hem in ignoraunce.
Rose 5466.

Cf. In the *Rose*: *angres*, 2554; *Jelousie*, 4381; *solas*, 6340.

LYDGATE has a few cases, of which the following are examples; note the non-caesural position:

So holsome was and só *noryshing* be kynde.
Complaint 59.

And never for *cherissking* the to mych avaunte.
Temple 1172.

HAWES's use is illustrated by the line,
 With cloth of *arras* in the rychést manér.
 17. 21.

SHAKESPEARE furnishes a multitude of examples, among them the following:

Whiles I in Ireland *nourish* a mighty band.
 2 *Henry VI*, III, 1, 348.
 Judicious *punishment*. 'Twas this flesh begot.
Measure I, 3, 39.

MILTON seems to use the resolution only once in all his work.³⁹ The single example is,

And all the *flourishing* works of peace destroy.
 PR III, 80.

8. *Resolution of the participle in ING.*

This resolution must not be confused with the single syni-

³⁹ Cf. Brown, p. 46.

zesis in participles like *being*, *seeing*, etc., where the stem ends in a vowel. In the cases to be cited the stem ends in a consonant, and resolution takes place.

CHAUCER shows these lines:

Withouté *wityng* of any oother wight.

A 1611.

Bischoff (*Eng. Stud.* xxv, 361) suggests making *withouté* dissyllabic, but the other examples show that the resolution is intended here.

Myn is the *stranglyng* and hangyng by the throte.

A 2458.

At first glance the elided form *Myn's* suggests itself, but the two preceding lines both begin *Myn is* without possibility of elision of *i*, and in 2458 it must be retained. Lines like,

Of herbe yve *growyng* in oure yeerd ther mery is,

B 4156.

where *w* has vocalic value and synizesis takes place, would probably influence other lines where resolution is not so easy. At any rate, the Chaucerians would slur the ending and think they had precedent in Chaucer. Some lines from the *Rose*, such as these that follow, would confirm this opinion:

Or of hir *laughing*, or of hir chere.

Rose 2819.

With many a *lesyng*, and many a fable.

Rose 4835.

LYDGATE has a number of similar resolutions. It will be noticed that in most of them the atonic vowel of the participial ending is between dental consonants. Several are interesting because of the non-caesural character of the resolution:

Well *menyng* merchauntes with trew artyficeres.
Assembly 908.

Musyng ón a maner how that I myght take.
Assembly 5.

Havyng ín her hand the palme of victory.
Assembly 1174.

It were not *sitting* that merci were behind.
Temple 679.

For in *abidyng* thurugh lowli obeissaunce.
Temple 864.

Cf. *abiding*, *Temple* 1089; *menyng*, *Temple* 898; *descendyng*, *Nightingale* c 80; *clymbyng*, HGS 601; etc.

HAWES uses the resolution, and does not confine it to the caesura, as in the line,

Outwardly *faynyng* us to be glad and mery.

SHAKESPEARE, too, shows that the resolution may be made elsewhere than at the caesura:

Having lóst the fair discovery of her way.
Venus and Adonis 828.

Cf. *having*, *M of V* III, 2, 124; 1 *Henry IV*, III, 1, 34.

9. *Resolution of words with final atonic y.*

This resolution is of peculiar interest on account of its frequency in Chaucer and the Chaucerians and of the comment it has excited. ten Brink says (*Language and Metre*, § 264), "Final *y* may appear as a semi-vowel in the word *Caunterbury*, which accordingly counts either as a quadrisyllable or as a trisyllable in the metre; in other cases only when the following word begins with a vowel." Schipper (*Metrik*, I, 451) calls the same instance a case of epic caesura in A 22. Both scholars

seem to overlook other words in *y*, many not at the caesura. All such words may be grouped under the head of resolution. The process probably began in words like *caryng*, *buryng*, etc., where development of syllabic *r* was followed by synizesis with the tonic vowel. The resolution thus completed in synizesis was extended to include other words where actual synizesis was impossible on account of intervening consonants. The *y* then became a mere grace note in the metrical foot, and genuine resolution was the result.

CHAUCER furnishes many examples. The simplest are those where the *y* is preceded by a liquid:

Of Engelond to Caunturbury they wende.

A 16.

To Caunterbury with ful devout corage.

A 22.

Fro Januarie with thank on every side.

E 1801.

Up ryseth January but fresshe May.

E 1859.

To Januarie whan that he for hire sente.

E 2008.

This noble Januarie with al his myght.

E 2023.

Cf. *Januarie*, E 2107, 2118. Bischoff (*Eng. Stud.* xxv, 394) would read *Januare*, citing *Cecile* < *Cecilie*, *Sweton* < *Swetonius*, *Maurice* < *Mauricius*, etc. This is unnecessary. Resolution is as well justified here as in *Caunturbury*; although etymologically different, the *y* has the same phonetic value in the two words, and can be resolved in both with equal propriety.

Other examples with *r* are as follows:

And contrarye to that other fyve.

Rose 991.

Cf. *forwery*, *Rose* 3336; *tarye*, *Rose* 3242; *verye*, *A* 3485 (cf. Bischoff, *ES* xxv, 359); an interesting line is *Rose* 2945,

Of *every* thou shált have grét plesaúnce.

Kaluza omits *gret*. Pollard remarks (*Globe Ed.*), "Two unaccented syllables, one of which is *shall* are not uncommon in the poem."

Examples where *l* precedes *y* are these:

My wit is *folý* my day is night.

Blaunche 609.

That thou shalt *hooly* with al thy wit.

Blaunche 750.

I shal right *blythly* so God me save.

Blaunche 755.

And Malencoly that angry sire.

Rose 4998.

It is but *folý* to entremete.

Rose 6503.

Examples where a *dental* precedes *y* are of great interest because they show so many cases where resolution occurs in non-caesural position:

His *body* was clad ful richely.

Rose 838.

If that I herde *ony* wight comyng.

Rose 536.

For thesteles shárpe of *many* meneeres.

Rose 1711.

"Thanne make thee *redy*," quod she, "I come anon."

A 3720.

Bischoff (*ES* xxv, 361, note 4) cites *she I* as a case of crasis; but this is manifestly out of place in the line above, since the pause after *she* militates against it. Other cases of the resolution are as follows: *studie*, *F* 1207; *F* 1214 (cf. Bischoff's

suggestions, *ES* xxv, 394); *gredy*, *Rose* 5791; *lady*, *Blaunche* 1110; *trusty*, *Rose* 7296; *hardy*, *A* 3957; *fourty*, *Rose*, 5733; *many*, *Rose* 5963, 6039; *esy*, *Rose* 1921, 4745.

LYDGATE is especially fond of this resolution. A few examples *not* at the caesura, will suffice:

Of *uerey* rygour, ryght as thay had deserved.

Nightingale c 207.

He gaf his *body* to man for chief repast.

Nightingale H 246.

All-*myghty* Ihesu receyve his soule to blisse.

Nightingale c 334.

The *many*-fold coloures to speke in generall.

HGS 92.

HAWES makes constant use of the resolution. The following are a few instances: *worthy*, 13. 21; *mony*, 23. 2; *clarycordes*, 61. 13; *clarycimbales*, 61. 12; *prevyte*, 82. 2; *qualyte*, 106. 19; 107. 20; *mighty*, 164. 28. The use is by no means confined to position at the caesura:

Ony maner ⁽sekenes wythout syght of uryne:

67. 16.

After the *qualyte* it doth take effecte.

106. 19.

SHAKESPEARE'S lines show the persistence of the resolution into modern verse:

This is the gentleman I told your *ladyship*.

Two Gentlemen, II, 4, 87.

Prettily methought did play the orator.

1 *Henry VI*, IV, 1, 175.

And I must freely have the half of *anything*.

M of V III, 2, 251.

Abbott (§ 467) gives many examples of what he calls the

dropping of unaccented *i* in the middle of a trisyllable. A goodly proportion of his citations belongs under our category of resolution of words in *y*.

MILTON's single instance in *Samson Agonistes* is another illustration of the dramatic use of Chaucerian formulae:

To something extraordinary my thoughts.

SA 1383.

Of this line Bridges says (p. 29), "It is without parallel in all the verse of *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*, there being in the fifth place a trisyllabic foot which is not resolvable by the fictions." The writer goes on to explain how it may be justified, and finally concludes that "the sense provoked it. It may at first seem childish to assert that 'something extraordinary' in the sense determined 'something extraordinary' in the prosody; yet to deny this," says Bridges, "requires the acceptance of an unlikely alternative," etc., etc. As a matter of fact there is nothing "extraordinary" either in the sense or the prosody, and the only "extraordinary" thing about the whole business is that Bridges should have devoted an entire page to the explanation of a metrical device as old as English verse itself.

10. *Resolution of words with final atonic vowel preceded by liquid or nasal.*⁴⁰

CHAUCER has:

That oon Puella, that oother Rubëus.

A 2045.

Unto the blisful Citherea benigne.

A 2215.

⁴⁰ An example from Dunbar has recently come under my notice: As yung Awrora with cristall haile. *Ane Ballat of the Fengeit Freir*, l. 1.

HAWES seems to use it once in the *Pastime*:

And drewe *Clara* Prudence that was hole and sounde.
181. 21.

MILTON, strange to say, furnishes at least two examples:

Out, out, *hyaena*! These are thy wonted arts.
SA 748.

Root-bound that fled *Apollo*. Fool do not boast.
Comus 662.

Bridges (p. 30), after devoting a page to an explanation of SA 748, and proposing several atrocious scansions, finally gives it up in despair. The use is a clear case of resolution, and should be compared with the similar resolution of atonic final *y*, particularly when the latter is preceded by liquid or nasal, as it is in many of the examples noted.

11. *Resolution of words in final w.*

This resolution is still in common use, but a few examples from CHAUCER are needed to show the extent to which such resolution might be carried by the Chaucerians who followed these models.

Ne nouther *yelw* ne broun it nas.
Blaunche 857.

That *arowe* was al with felonye.
Rose 978.

And fayre in *shadowe* was every well.
Rose 1411.

As we be wonte *herborowe* we crave.
Rose 7493.

Here belongs, perhaps, the remarkable line,

Wylugh, élm, plane, asshe, box, chasteyn, lynde, laurer.
A 2922.

12. *Resolution of words in final -IAN, -ION, -IOUN.*

An unusual resolution, which does not seem to appear in Chaucer, is found several times in Lydgate, each time at the caesura; in the poem *HGS* it is unusually frequent:

Hav be savacion to many a worthi knyght.

HGS 42.

Cf. *Rhethoriciens*, HGS 185; *presumpcioun*, HGS 509; *discrecioun*, HGS 606; *promocioun*, HGS 610.

Perhaps the most interesting modern example is Milton's line,

But for that damned *magician* let him be girt,

Comus 602.

of which Masson asks, "Will anyone venture to say that *magician* is to be pronounced *magishn*?" To this one can only reply, How is it pronounced in every day speech? The answer to this question is frequently helpful, not only here but in all instances of resolution.

The particular resolution referred to is frequently met in modern English verse.

13. *Resolution of unstressed monosyllables. Resolved thesis.*

This is one of the commonest resolutions both in ancient and modern English verse, and is by no means confined to lines of "loose" or "free" construction. Unlike some of the other features recently considered, it is as frequently used in much modern verse, notably in Tennyson's, as it ever was in the history of the poetry.

CHAUCER uses the device fairly often. ten Brink would not admit this fact; he says, (*Language and Metre* § 272), "Combinations like *with a*, *and a*, *in the*, appear to me to be very

doubtful; for the present I should prefer to consider them non-Chaucerian." In the face of this opinion the following examples have great interest. I do not overlook the fact that in a few cases other readings, by means of elisions, apocope, aphaeresis, etc., are possible; but the natural and the normal scansion seems to be by resolution.

The first example is interesting because of its group of resolutions:

But if it be unto a poure man
To a poure man men sholde his vices telle
 But not *to a* lord thogh he sholde go to helle.
 D 2076-2078.

With a thredbare cope as is a poure scoler.
 A 260.

For hym was levere have *at his* beddès heed.
 A 293.

Of a solempne and a greet fraternitee.
 A 364.

Til al the noyse *of the* peple was y-do.
 A 2534.

In the name of Cryst cridè this olde Britoun.⁴¹
 B 561.

At the goddes wil for which she moste bleve.
Troilus III, 623.

And the Parlement of foules as I gesse.
Legend B 419.

And "Mate!" *in the* myd poynt of the chekkere.
Blaunche 660.

As wel of this *as of* othere thynges moore.
 D 584.

For a fayre lady that hight Echo.
Rose 1474.

⁴¹ This reading is confirmed by *Corpus*, *Petworth*, *Lansdowne*. Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 307 (2).

And next her wente in hir other side.

Rose 877.

The negative, *ne*, is resolved frequently with other unstressed monosyllables, as in the lines,

I ne saugh this yeer so myrie a compaignye.

A 763.

I ne saye but for this ende this sentence.

B 1139.

Me ne lakketh but my deth and than my bere.

Pitee 105.

The *Rose* offered to the Chaucerians numerous examples of resolved thesis. Among them are: *If I*, 3118; *I ne*, 3413; *And is*, 4333; *For an*, 5693; *not a*, 5730; *of the*, 6965; *ne I*, 7149; *that hath*, 7471; *He ne*, 7525.

LYDGATE'S use of the double thesis is not so frequent as might be expected. The *Assembly of Gods*, very free in versification, shows a number of instances: *But I*, 7; *with a*, 126; *in the*, 361; *that he*, 383; *but there*, 410; *ys he*, 1231. An interesting line shows the feature twice:

To the dynt of my dart for doole nor destyny.

Assembly 487.

Other examples from Lydgate are: *Temple: there was*, 77; *that was*, 781; *and with*, 1176; HGS: *bi the*, 12; *in re*, 34, 96; *with an*, 292; *of a*, 312. Other examples in the *Nightingale* poems; to a very limited extent in *Temple* and *Complaint*.

HAWES is the chief representative of this resolution. His use of it in the *Pastime* is so frequent as to be a characteristic feature of the verse. As a rule the resolution is that of the initial thesis, but it is not confined to that position. The grouping is usually that of the article and the preposition, but here, again, there is no fixed rule, although departures from it are comparatively rare. Examples are unnecessary, since almost every stanza contains the resolution.

Modern verse furnishes so many examples that the use passes without comment. Even the strict pentameter of Milton shows at least two in *Paradise Lost*.

In billows, leave *in the* midst a horrid vale.

PL I 224.

In the midst an altar as the landmark stood.

PL XI 432.

Comus, with freer versification, has the lines:

To seek *in the* valley some cool friendly spring.

282.

Feared her stern frown and she was queen *of the* woods.

446.

Tennyson's use of resolved thesis is marked in the *Princess*, where it constitutes a feature almost as noticeable as in the *Pastime of Pleasure*.

14. *Aphaeresis*.

This feature is closely related to the resolution of lightly stressed monosyllables in thesis. In the case of aphaeresis, however, the position may be either thesis or arsis, and the initial vowel (or unaspirated *h*) seems to lose its value either entirely or almost entirely, and hence the process is not a resolution in the sense in which that term has been used heretofore. The device is a valuable if not an attractive aid to the versifier, and the Chaucerians made free use of it.

CHAUCER himself did not hesitate to employ it, as the following lines bear witness. The more common forms, such as those with *is* and *it*, have been omitted.

And *saugh* his visage al in another kinde.

A 1401.

Pekke hem up right as they growe and ete hem yn.

B 4157.

She bothe hir yonge children unto *her* calleth.

E 1081.

And *leyde* it above upon the myddeward.

G 1190.

He *shoop* his ingot in lengthe and eek in breede.

G 1228.

And "Thus *shal* *hit* be," and "Thus herde I seye."

Fame III, 963.

Cf. In *Blaunche*: *is it*, 181; *grette hym*, 516; *of hem*, 887; *took it*, 793. In the *Rose*: *aproch it*, 2001; *desire it*, 3115; *is it*, 3529; *can it*, 4796; *bidde hem*, 6667; *of hem*, 7094; *well is*, 7219; *I wole*, 4609; *'pon*, 1980.

LYDGATE not only makes the freest use of the ordinary forms sanctioned by common use, but extends the clipping to cases where it is still more objectionable. Such are the following:

I *mene* of Cupide that shal him so distres.

Temple 444.

Count of ther Citees the famous Governauce.

Secrees 171.

For *right* as falsnesse anoon fyndith out his feere.

Two Merchants 71.

Here the initial vowels of the words *of* and *as* practically disappear and the consonant left is attached to the preceding word; a very ugly and, fortunately, not very common feature.

HOCCEVE, usually free, comparatively speaking, from redundancies of any kind, seems to have adopted this objectionable device; but he does not carry it, perhaps, as far as Lydgate, and usually confines the use to the pronouns *it* and *his*. We find, however, (*Be*)*twixt* (*Regement*, 2655).

HAWES makes frequent use of aphaeresis and usually confines it to the more common forms; but we find (*u*)*pon*, 165.28; (*a*)*mong*, 184.19; (*a*)*gaynst*, 192.26, 119.4; (*a*)*nother*, 128.4; (*a*)*bove*, 116.27; (*be*)*gan*, 14.18; etc.

SHAKESPEARE outdoes even the Chaucerians in this freedom. Cf. Abbott, § 460; Van Dam and Stoffel, Chapter II.

15. *Apocope.*

Like the feature usually known as aphaeresis, apocope has much in common with ordinary resolution, but there is an important difference. In the case of resolved thesis the two monosyllables combined are always short words normally slurred over in speech; usually it is a group consisting of preposition + article that is resolved. In the case of apocope, however, as in that of aphaeresis, the final vowel of the article or preposition seems to lose its value when used immediately before a substantive; that is especially true when the substantive begins with a liquid or a labial. What is left of the prefixed article or preposition remains as a mere light touch or grace note in the foot.

CHAUCER furnishes these examples as models for his followers. Bischoff would bring under this head many cases where pure resolution seems to be the real solution.

A! quod *th'* Yemán, heere shal arise a game.

G 703.

This reading is confirmed by ll. 684, 686, 691, 701, etc., of the same poem, in all of which the accent is *Yemán*.

Had Dydo, *th'* quene eek of Cartage.

Blaunche 731.

Of Alysaundre, and al *th'* rychesse.

Blaunche 1059.

The following cases in the supposedly non-Chaucerian portion of the *Rose* may have furnished models:

T' worshiþe no wight by aventure.

Rose 2119.

For *th'* Romaunce bigynneth to amende.

Rose 2154.

I nil resseyve *unt'* my servise.

Rose 2185.

T' make faire semblaunt where thou maist blame.

Rose 4026.

The Chaucerians found a convenient means here, and used it entirely too often. LYDGATE and HOCCEVE show occasional examples, but HAWES resorts to the device on all occasions, and many difficult lines may be read with ease if this fact is borne in mind.

SHAKESPEARE'S frequent use, and that of other moderns, is too well known to need comment.

16. *Syncope.*

CHAUCER'S frequent use of syncope throws light on the prosody of his followers. The master's liberties are many, and the disciples may be depended upon for having added to them. That real syncopation of the vowel took place, and not simply a light emphasis of the atonic vowel, seems to be indicated in some cases by the spelling itself. In others, resolution rather than genuine syncope may be intended.

One of the commonest syncopations is that in the word *comprehend* in its various forms. The actually shortened form is found in the lines,

And ek the beste as my wit can *comprende*.

Troilus IV, 891.

As muche joye as herte may *comprende*.

Troilus III, 1687.

Cf. *comprendith* (*Boece* v, p. 4, 136 n.); *comprende*d (*Boece* I, m. 2, 10 n.). In spite of these examples Schipper (*Metrik* I, 464) reads B 2147:

Cōmprēhended in this litel tretys heere.

Another frequently shortened word is *Jerusalem*. Examples are:

And thriës hadde she been at *Jerusalem*.

A 463.

He twyès wan *Jerusalem* the citee.

B 3337.

Out of the temple of *Jerusalem* birafte.

B 3386.

The form *Jersalem* in *Rose* 554 may indicate the syncopation intended; ⁴²

Fro *Jersalem* unto Burgoyne.

Other interesting examples of syncope are *significavit*, A 662; *positif*, A 1167; *bendiste*, *Troilus* I, 780; *Benedicite*, B 1170; *misericorde*, ABC 35; *philosophical*, *Troilus* v, 1856; *Palamoun*, *Legend* B 420; *Dedalus*, *Blaunche* 569; *Antony*, *Legend* 657, 701; *anguler*, *Rose* 98. An unusual instance is that of verbs with prefix *be-* (*bi-*) of which *Troilus* iv, 1484 is an example:

That ay drede I that ye wol *bleven* there.

HAWES is a most prominent representative of this method of syncopation. In addition to all the more usual forms, he makes extraordinary use of the syncopation of the vowel of the *be-* prefix just cited for Chaucer. Examples are: *defrauded*, 18.25; *beholdyng*, 49.10; 69.8; *reherse*, 71.25; *departyng*, 93.18; *begynne*, 95.9; *behelde*, 115.9; 134, 21; 197.26; *beholde*, 161.18.

SHAKESPEARE makes use of the same feature in many lines, among them,

This man hath *bewitched* the bosom of my child.

MND I, 1, 27.

I *beseech* your graces both to pardon me.

Rd. III I, 84, 103.

For the fullest treatment of Shakespeare's syncopations, see Van Dam and Stoffel, Chapter iv.

MILTON's freer pentameter in *Paradise Regained*, *Samson*

⁴² But see ten Brink, § 263; *Oxford Chaucer* VII, xciv, note.

Agonistes, and *Comus*, and even the stricter verse of *Paradise Lost*, show many cases of syncope. Among them the following are worthy of notice:

By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine.

SA 443.

Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift?

SA 577.

Curiosity inquisitive importune.

SA 775.

Present in temples at idolatrous rites.

SA 1378.

Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.

PL XI, 563.

In the last example, however, and in many others in Milton, there is the strongest probability that no *real* syncope of the atonic vowel takes place. The process seems rather to be that of resolution, the vowel retaining much of its value. So I should prefer to classify the following examples from *Paradise Lost*: *politic*, III 400; *torturing*, II, 91; *immesurably*, II 844; *populous*, IX 445; *ridiculous*, XII 62. From *Paradise Regained*: *oraculous*, III 14; *specular*, IV 236.

V. RESULTS OF THE STUDY OF SYLLABIFICATION.

Sixteen unusual methods of resolution have now been considered, and it has been shown that, while their use is probably more frequent at the caesura than elsewhere, resolution is by no means confined to that position. This fact militates against an actual epic caesura in English verse. It has also been shown that Chaucer furnished for his successors examples of almost every known resolved stress. If, now, we add to this already long list of devices for getting rid of redundancy, the usual and far more common methods involving combination between vowel sounds and between vowels and other elements, in short, the customary phonetic combinations in the line, the result is

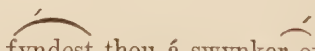
an astonishingly large number of metrical possibilities and prosodic liberties. The difficulty with the verse of the Tradition is its too frequent use of legitimate freedoms. Although every instance of resolution in the line may be perfectly justifiable, the occurrence of several in one line, and again in the next line, constitutes license, and makes abominable reading. It is this exaggerated use of legitimate methods that has brought down upon the heads of the Chaucerians the accusation of lack of system and the charge of metrical chaos.

Sometimes, even in Chaucer's own verse for that matter, the line has to be studied out and the verse-scheme of the poem known before the line can be correctly scanned. The rhythm does not reveal itself except after the closest examination. At first glance, for example, the reader would make the following line a regular five-foot verse:

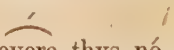
Where fyndest thou a swynker of labour.

Rose 6857.

As a matter of fact the line occurs in a four-foot scheme and must be read, as it can be without transgressing any law of prosody,

Where  *fyndest* thou *á* *swynker* of *laboúr*.

A remarkable example of this mania for crowding syllables is one of Lydgate's verses:

Talýved  *evere* *thys* *nó* *lesyúge*.

Pilgrim. 1019.

As a member of a four-foot scheme, this line must be read with four iambic feet. Written out in full it is seen to have eleven syllables:

To have lived ever this is no lesynge.

Miss Locock thinks another line from the *Pilgrimage* has a

redundant syllable "unless we prefer to read it as a ten-syllable line."⁴³

Your shépperde thát taketh óf yow képe.

Pil. 2159.

It does not seem to have occurred to the editor that the line is a member of a four-foot scheme and that it is a very simple matter to read it as such. Certain lines from Hawes's *Pastime* illustrate the same danger of crowding syllables, and consequent misunderstanding. The line,

Where sat Arysmatryke in a golden wede,

56.17.

would be read by the majority of editors,

Where sát Arýsmatrýke in a gólden wéde.

when it should be read,

Where sát Arsmétric in a gólden wéde.

Other lines showing the same feature are:

There lacketh a membre by great impediment.

107.10.

As Roland and Olyver of his alyaunce.

211.10.

A fruitful source of misunderstanding is the peculiar use of the pronoun *I*. When it is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, crasis frequently takes place, as in the lines:

There saugh Í also the sorow of Palamoun.

Temple 102.

And so Í ascended unto dame Logyke.

Pastime 145.20.

⁴³ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 92, XL.

Ȧlyght anone upon my gentyll stede.

Pastime 166.22.

HAWES has many lines that emphasize the need of the greatest care in scansion. Among them may be noted the following:

It was the custome of an olde antiquite.

9.8.

And so from thence unto the tower of chyvalry.

18.9.

As the seven Scyences in vertue so shynyng.

21.3.

At first glance these lines appear to be hopeless doggerel; but when printed, as they were without doubt read, with the free slurring of the time, they are seen to be pentameters of a free sort:

'Twas th' custome of an olde antiquite.

And so from thence 'to th' tower of chyvalry.

As th' seven Scyence' in vertue so shynyng.

The matter of syllabification has been emphasized perhaps unduly in this section because I am convinced that the chief cause of the accusation of irregularity made against the poets of the Tradition is due to an attempt to measure their lines by a modern syllable-rule. In our own time, when verse is not written to be read aloud, it is almost impossible to realize that there ever existed such extreme liberty in the matter of contraction and expansion. It is hoped that the showing of freedom in Chaucer and, less marked, in later verse, may induce a larger charity for the much abused versifiers of the Chaucerian Tradition.

B. THE SHORTENED LINE.

I. DIRECT ATTACK (INITIAL TRUNCATION).

The shortened, or so-called defective, line presents more serious difficulties than the redundant. The octosyllable with

direct attack has always been admitted, without much question, for English verse; the heroic line that lacks the requisite ten syllables has, on the other hand, met with some opposition. To it we are indebted for a good deal of the evidence brought forward in support of tumbling verse and the so-called "break-down" of Chaucer's decasyllable. That lines that "faile in a sillable" or even "sillables" do exist in the verse of the Tradition nobody can deny. That they are found even in Chaucer is equally indisputable. Even ten Brink, who steadfastly opposes any irregularity in Chaucer's lines, and does not hesitate at any emendation to avoid one, is forced to this conclusion,⁴⁴ and Schipper acknowledges the same fact.⁴⁵ Freudenberger settles the matter of the existence of direct attack in the ten-syllable line by bringing together the many examples of the phenomenon.⁴⁶ The apparent absence of the unstressed syllable after a masculine caesura is not so easily disposed of, and is not so readily admitted for Chaucer. Yet examples seem to occur even there. Skeat reluctantly furnishes a few,⁴⁷ and ten Brink, driven to the same resort, admits the phenomenon as "probable but not absolutely certain."⁴⁸ With so distinguished an example as their master, what could be expected of the Chaucerians? Accordingly, we find numerous cases of initial direct attack throughout the period, and a few apparent cases of that weird monstrosity, Schick's C-type.⁴⁹ A somewhat closer examination will show, however, that few genuine examples of either of these two forms of direct attack are without justification, and will point out, in addition, that not all the cases prominently cited are genuine. Accordingly, it is proposed to devote some space to each kind.

⁴⁴ Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, §§ 302, 307, 314.

⁴⁵ Cf. Schipper, *Metrik* I, § 188.

⁴⁶ Cf. Freudenberger, *Über das Fehlen des Auftakts in Chaucers heroischem Vers*, Leipzig, 1889.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Oxford Chaucer*, VI, § 110.

⁴⁸ Cf. *Language and Metre*, § 314.

⁴⁹ Cf. *The Temple of Glas*, EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, LVIII.

1. *Initial Direct Attack.*

(a) In the four-foot line.

The occurrence of "headless" lines in four-foot verse is so frequent as to cause no comment, except from a few precisians. For the verse of the Tradition, Chaucer set the example and his short line abounds in occurrences of the phenomenon. This freedom ten Brink wrongly ascribes to the influence of "originally Germanic metrical schemes."⁵⁰ Lydgate uses it to an extraordinary extent, especially in the *Pilgrimage* and in *Reson and Sensuallyte*. Furnivall finds this feature "one of the most striking in the *Pilgrimage*";⁵¹ his examples show that the initial word is most often a preposition, a conjunction, or even an article. The passage ll. 11132-11212, I find, illustrates the point especially well. Here 32 of the 80 lines are catalectic, a remarkable showing. Sieper finds in *Reson and Sensuallyte* a percentage of 300 out of 1000 lines with omission of the first thesis. "Such verses," says he, "in which the opening syllable is wanting are strictly of trochaic metre. The poet seems to have been more or less unconsciously influenced by this fundamental alteration in the metre; for frequently, after falling into the trochaic step, he adheres to it for some time, and then suddenly drops back to his usual measure."⁵² The passage cited from the *Pilgrimage* illustrates this fact particularly well. Sieper's use of the expressions "unconsciously influenced" and "fundamental alteration" suggest a psychological basis for direct attack and for the differentiation between iambic and trochaic rhythms.

Starting out with the principle, well-founded on experiment, that the grouping of rhythmic impressions and move-

⁵⁰ Cf. *Language and Metre*, § 302.

⁵¹ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 77, xi.

⁵² Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 12.

ments is easier by twos than by threes,⁵³ we conclude that trochaic and iambic rhythms are the primitive and natural poetic mediums. The question then arises, which of the two may be assumed as fundamental? Experiment answers this query quickly enough. Bolton tested the ear by furnishing at regular intervals a sequence of sounds that did not vary in pitch, intensity, or quality. The listening ear found the sounds not uniformly continuous but tending to break up into groups containing a larger or smaller number of sounds, as the rate was fast or slow. Most important for us is the fact that "the grouping was accomplished by placing a stress or accent upon the first sound in a group," and that "in a group of three, the first and second were accented, the first more strongly than the second; in groups of four, the first and third were accented, the first again being the stronger." All this was based upon the rhythmical character of the attention.⁵⁴

Here we have, I believe, the true explanation of the tendency toward direct attack. It is the result of the innate impulse toward trochaic rhythm. If literary confirmation be needed, it is abundant in early Germanic verse of the stichic character, where the A-type predominates. This is notably true of the *Beowulf*.⁵⁵ I cannot agree, then, with Lewis, who speaks of an "innate dislike for trochaic rhythm" and thinks it "less agreeable because less easy, the initial explosion conveying a sense of effort and difficulty."⁵⁶ In another place he speaks of the "innate preference for iambic rhythms" and the "unconscious going over into iambic" as due to this innate preference.⁵⁷ The preference he alludes to is much more apt to be an acquired taste. Early Germanic poetry shows no such preference, and the subconscious rhythmical sense still adheres

⁵³ Cf. Scripture, E. W., *The Elements of Experimental Phonetics* [Yale Bicentennial Publications]. New York, 1902, p. 535.

⁵⁴ Cf. Scripture, pp. 520, 521.

⁵⁵ Cf. Sievers, PBB. x, 222.

⁵⁶ Cf. Lewis, *Principles of English Verse*, p. 104.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

to its fundamental rhythm. Bolton's experiments and his opinion confirm my own view of this change of taste. He ascribes the early preference for trochaic rhythm and the modern taste for iambic feet to a difference in the method of reading verse. Early poetry was recited in emotional states, and maintained a high monotone; modern verse tends to observe quantities and prose accents, and loses the high key. Experiment shows that this makes a difference in the metrical unit or foot. The series of auditory impressions uniform in length and intensity were, we have seen, grouped in the mind by giving a fictitious value of greater intensity to the first member of the group, thus creating a trochaic or a dactylic rhythm. On the other hand, when the series was composed of impressions differing in duration, the sounds were grouped with the long impression last, thus creating an iambic or an anapaestic rhythm.⁵⁸ It is easy to understand how, when early verse was scanned in musical monotone (the emotional strain) the trochaic type would appear naturally, because every syllable would receive much the same value in length and intensity, and so constitute a series of comparatively unvarying auditory impressions. As the verses lost their primitive or intoned form, and began to take account of quantities, the members of the series would vary in length and intensity. The accented syllables, like the accented sounds, would seem to be longer than the unaccented, and would determine groups of which they themselves would be the last members. Series of syllables, in other words, arranged with reference to the regular recurrence of the accented syllables, would fall into groups, and these groups would be iambic or anapaestic. Here is, perhaps, the explanation of the early appearance of the iambic rhythm in preference to the trochaic, for the first appearance of the artifices of quantity and accent would affect the character of the rhythm.

Obviously, the further verse gets from the primitive method of intonation and the more it strives after a regular alternation

⁵⁸ Cf. Bolton, *AJPsy.* vi, pp. 232-234.

of long and short, or accented and unaccented, syllables, the greater is the tendency toward the iambic foot. On the other hand, when, for any reason, verse reverts to the formal or the emotional type, there is a slight tendency in the other direction, and this tendency asserts itself naturally and primitively at the beginning of the syllable-group. The appearance of direct attack in the verse of the Tradition seems to indicate for that period the elevated method of scansion that is claimed for it in Chapter III, a scansion approximating the emotional strain. On this basis the dropping of the initial thesis in four-foot verse is not without sanction.

It was further developed by experiment that "in groups of eight the accents came always upon the first and the fifth members."⁵⁹ These correspond to the first and fifth syllables in a verse of eight; that is, to the initial syllable and the first syllable after the caesura. This justifies, on psychological grounds, the not infrequent use of the direct attack after the caesura when special rhetorical emphasis is desired; in such cases the speech-rhythm takes advantage of the opportunity afforded by the natural rhythmical law of verse.

The conclusion seems justified, then, that the occurrence of series of lines with direct attack is explained, as Sieper has suggested, by the poet's being "unconsciously influenced by the fundamental alteration." The innate rhythmical impulse, once prevailing over the fixed conflicting metrical scheme, continues to exercise its influence through a series of lines, until the regular scheme once more asserts itself.

Initial direct attack thus stands crowned as one of the phenomena of an innate rhythmical impulse, persisting most strongly in the octosyllable because there the artificial tension⁶⁰ is at its lowest point, and most frequent in older English verse because the method of scansion there more nearly approximates primitive conditions.

⁵⁹ Cf. *Scripture*, p. 521.

⁶⁰ Cf. Chapter III, Section iv.

That these inferences are true, and that the natural structure of the octosyllable is a very strong factor in keeping it almost rigidly normal, will be discussed in the next chapter.

(b) In the five-foot line.

Suppression of the initial thesis in the heroic line is felt to differ materially from the same phenomenon in the short line. ten Brink realizes this when he says: "Chaucer certainly permits suppression of the anacrusis (sic) in the normal short line of four beats; but the inherent difference between this verse and heroic metre ought not to be disregarded. . . . Personally, when in reading a Chaucerian poem in heroic metre I come upon a verse without anacrusis, I experience a jarring sensation for which I should be loth to make the poet responsible."⁶¹ To go further, to lay the blame on the long-suffering scribe, and to patch up the line to fit a mechanical rule, are methods characteristic of this critic. His approval of the reading,

A twenty bookes clad in blak or reed.

A 294.

is enough by itself to condemn this entire doctrine. Yet that reading is agreed upon by ten Brink and others, who find "an emendation necessary."⁶² Happily for Chaucer's verse, all scholars are not of the same opinion on this point, and there are few who would deny an occasional "headless" line even among pentameters. Schipper (*Metrik* I, § 188) admits the moderate use of direct attack in the *Prologue*. Freudenberger, after examining a very large number of examples, not all of which, perhaps, will stand, concludes that Chaucer permitted "headless" lines in heroic as well as in four-foot verse.⁶³

Freudenberger's work establishes and strengthens a fact long

⁶¹ *Language and Metre*, § 307. Cf. Saintsbury, *Prosody* I, 171.

⁶² *Language and Metre*, § 314. Cf. the wholly unnecessary emendation proposed in § 316 for A 1014.

⁶³ Cf. Freudenberger, p. 83.

known, but it does not offer any justification for the phenomenon in the heroic line, and seems to put it into the same class as the similar feature in the octosyllable. Yet examination will show, I think, that in very many cases there is no syntactical or rhetorical justification for dropping the initial thesis in the short line, whereas, in the heroic line, the majority of cases seem to be justified by one or the other of these causes. In other words, initial direct attack in four-foot verse seems to be due to the psychological demand, under monotone scansion, for trochaic rhythm, whereas the phenomenon in the heroic line seems to occur in response to the demands of syntax or of rhetoric; the former is due to purely natural causes, largely subconscious; the latter is an artificial device, and an indication of the versifier's skill.

The examples from Chaucer seem to fall naturally into four large classes. In each group the motive is emphasis. The poet has resorted to the device of direct attack in order to lay stress on the initial syllable of the line in the following cases:

(a) For initial vocative or dramatic emphasis, the word gaining double stress by the two-fold effect of initial position and heavy accent.

(b) To assist in preserving the sentence rhythm in *enjambement*, the initial word carrying over the phrase or clause from the preceding line with continuity of tone as well as continuity of sentence-structure, and, when final *e* appears, with continuity of the rhythm.

(c) To secure emphasis for the conjunction, especially the adversative conjunction; by this means antithetical and cumulative effects are heightened. The accents of modern colloquial prose furnish examples of the same method, used in obedience to the instinct to attract attention, by means of abnormal emphasis upon the pivotal word, to the balanced, contrasted, or merely added statement. The poet has the peculiar advantage of the shock of a "short circuit" in the rhythm.

(d) When a single word is to be emphasized for special reasons other than those stated above; this usage seems to be uncommon.

The following examples will illustrate the several uses just referred to.

Examples of vocative or dramatic emphasis:

- Máy, with alle thy floures and thy grene
Wélcome be thou faire, fresshe May. A 1510, 1511.
- Ló! Rouchestre stant heer faste by! B 3115.
- Aírtow thanne a bailly? Ye, quod he! D 1392.
- That never Jason, ne Parys of Troye,—
Jáson? Certes ne noon oother man. F 549.
- Nów, good sires, what wol ye bet than wel? G 1283.

Examples of direct attack with enjambement.

- For hym was levere have at his beddes heed
Twénty bookès clad in blak or reed.⁶⁴ A 294.
- Out of the develes ers ther gonne dryve
Twénty thousand freres in a route. D 1695.
- And whan he rood men myghte his brydel heere
Gýnglen in a whistlynge wynd als cleere. A 169, 170.
- Saugh I Conquest sittynge in greet honour
Wíth the sharpe swerd over his heed
Hángynge by a soutil twynes threed. A 2028-2030.

⁶⁴ Cf. Freudenberger, p. 26; and ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 314.

That alle the gretteste that were of that lond
Pléyyngge atte hasard he hem fond.

C 608.

And right anon, this irous, cursed wrecche
Leét this knyghtes sone bifore hym fecche.

D 2064.

Ye moote with the platte swerd ageyn
Strike hym in the wounde and it wol close.

F 165.

Wel coude she carie a morsel and wel kepe
Thát no drope ne fille upon hire breste.

A 131.

And noght slayn, but be broght unto the stake
Thát shal ben ordeyned on either syde.

A 2553.

That in his guttes carf it so and boot,
Thát his peynes weren importable.

B 3792.

It is nat honeste, it may nat avaunce
Fór to deelen with no swiche poraille.

A 247.

He rood upon a rouncey as he kouthe
Iú agowne of faldyng to the knee.

A 391.

And kiste hire sweete, and chirketh as a sparwe
Wíth his lyppes: ‘Dame,’ quod he, ‘right weel.’

D 1805.

And of hir clothyng took he the mesure
Bý a mayde lyke to hire of stature.

E 257.

That never for to dyen in the peyne
Tíl that deeth departe shal us tweyne.

A 1134.

But thus I lete in lust and jolitee
This Cambyuskan his lordes festeiynge
Tíl wel my the day bigan to sprynge.

F 346.

Of fustian he wered a gypon
 Ál bismotered with his habergeon.

A 76.

So in o beynge of divinitee
 Thré persones may ther right wel bee.

G 341.

The passage beginning with D 869 is an unusual case of the feeling of continuity extended through several lines and expressed in each by initial direct attack.

That serchen every lond and every streem,
 As thikke as motes in the sonne beem,—
 Bléssynge halles, chambres, kichenes, boures,
 Citées, burghes, castels hyè toures,
 Thrópes, bernès, shipnes, dayeryes.

D 867 ff.

The thread of continuity is maintained by the words *sérchen* *bléssynge* *citées* *thrópes*, and it is not broken until the series has been completed.

Examples of emphasis upon the conjunction:

That oon may seen his lady day by day
 Bút in prison he moot dwelle alway.

A 1350.

Amonges a thousand men yet foond I oon
 Bút of wommen alle foond I noon

E 2248.

My sone ful oftè for to muchè speche
 Hath many a man been spilt, as clerkès teche
 Bút for litel speche avysèly.

H 327.

That wered of yelewe gooldès a gerland
 And a cokkow sitynge on hir hand.

A 1930.

He seith he kan no differencè fynde
Betwix a man that is out of his mynde
And a man which that is dronkelewe.

C 495.

My lord is hard to me and dangerous
And myn office is ful laborous.

D 1428.

Sometimes the conjunction begins the sentence but still has rhetorical emphasis:

Bút this scorpioun, this wikked goost.

B 404.

Initial direct attack for various purposes of rhetorical emphasis:

This class embraces all cases, other than those cited above, where the rhetoric of the sentence demands special emphasis upon a word. This emphasis is secured by giving it initial stressed position. Such lines are:

Ó persone allone, withouten mo.

A 2725.

Nó man myghte gladen Theseus.

A 2837.

Sometimes the immediate context is involved and indicates the emphasis, as in the lines,

And therfore, at the kyngès court, my brother,
Éch man for hymself, ther is noon oother.

A 1182.

What nedeth you rehercen hir array?
Éch man woot wel that a kynges feeste.

F 299.

Neither his collect, ne his expans yeeris,
Né his rootès, ne his othere geeris.⁶⁵

F 1276.

⁶⁵ This should, perhaps, be classified under (c).

It is hardly necessary to furnish examples from the poets of the Tradition. The freedom of the master in the matter of dropping the initial thesis was for them a dangerous precedent, and one which they were not slow in following. As they had exaggerated his syllabic liberties in the matter of redundancy, so they failed to observe his temperance in the matter of the dropped thesis. With this fact in mind, the reader may be able to mend many apparently defective lines in the verse of the Tradition. Not, in every case, by applying the strict Chaucerian canon; in many cases the use of direct attack seems purely arbitrary. But undoubtedly these poets had no intention of disobeying the rules, and thought themselves quite within the limits of the law, as, indeed, in one sense, they were. In general, it is safe to assume direct attack whenever it will help out the line, and without reference to Chaucer's use. In this way a great number of apparently defective lines are made normal.

2. *Initial Inversion.*

Although the subject is not strictly in place at this point, it seems best to digress here to the phenomenon known as initial inversion of the iambic foot. The common occurrence of the inverted foot at the beginning of the iambic line, very rarely elsewhere, leads one to suspect a cause for the apparent preference. The accepted canons of English metric permit inversion practically anywhere. Professor Bright's proposal to restrict it to the first foot in the line⁶⁶ was taken to indicate a weakness in his theory of rhythm. Thus Omond remarks,⁶⁷ "Professor Bright surely gives away his case when he admits that 'inversion' may occur in one foot, the first. If in one foot, why not in others?" Lest the preceding pages of this chapter have not already answered Mr. Omond's question, I

⁶⁶ *Proper Names in Old English Verse*, PMLA xiv, No. 2, p. 362.

⁶⁷ T. S. Omond, *English Metrists*, Oxford University Press, 1907, p. 221.

reply more definitely: Because the innate feeling for trochaic rhythm does not assert itself so strongly after the actual rhythm of the line begins to assert itself. At the beginning of the verse, on the other hand, this instinct for an initial accented syllable often induces the poet to lead off with such a syllable; immediately afterward, the actual rhythm asserts itself anew, and we have the phenomenon of initial inversion. It is really, then, the occasional subconscious reversion to the primitive, that is, the trochaic, type of rhythm. Finally, it may occur in verses of any length, hence the decasyllable is often subject to its appearance.

3. *Direct Attack after the Caesura.*

With a clearer idea of the syllabic freedom of the Tradition and of its unsystematic use of initial direct attack, the ground is cleared in a measure for the last and hardest problem of the prosody.

In the beginning it must be admitted that a number, not a great number, of the lines of Lydgate, Hoccleve, Hawes, and even of Wyatt seem to lack the thesis after the caesura. This phenomenon was so marked in Lydgate that the editor of the *Temple of Glas* was led to originate the famous C-type, which he declared he found very common in all Lydgate's work and which he thought peculiarly Lydgatean.⁶⁸ All subsequent editors of Lydgate adopted the nomenclature and found examples in their several works;⁶⁹ and thus Lydgate is saddled with the "precious, broken-backed C."

As a rule, the use is taken as a license of the worst sort, and as an unmistakable evidence of the tendency to break away from syllabic restraint and fall into "tumbling." Sieper, in striking contrast to this otherwise unanimous opinion, attempts

⁶⁸ Cf. Schick, EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, LVIII.

⁶⁹ Cf. Triggs, EETS. Ext. Ser. 69, xvi; Sieper, Ext. Ser. 89, p. 15; Locock, Ext. Ser. 92, xxxv, xxxviii; Krausser, *Anglia*, xix, 225, etc.

not only to justify but to praise the ugly feature. He limits the license, indeed, to the octosyllable, but even then he is hardly justified in saying:

"At the beginning of a verse a monosyllabic or trisyllabic foot scarcely breaks the rhythm at all. At the same time, after the caesura, which, to our sense of rhythm, constitutes the beginning of a new and independent line, the omission or addition of a thesis does not offend. In this way it happens that we are not, so to speak, thrown off the track by the variations from the strict iambic, and do not lose the sense of an even and regular motion. But further, this license in verse-structure not only constitutes no violation of fundamental metrical form to which the most refined ear could object, but is even, if used judiciously, a positive advantage to the rhythm. It breaks the wearisome monotony of the French octosyllabic line with refreshing variation, and imparts a touch of sprightliness to a somewhat ponderous measure."⁷⁰

This defense, which is intended to apply, not only to those cases of post-caesural direct attack justified by rhetorical demands, but to the indiscriminate use of that feature, is, as far as I know, quite unprecedented. It is, too, founded on the half-truth that the second part of the line "to our sense of rhythm constitutes the beginning of a new and independent line." Although this statement has a modicum of psychological justification when applied, as Sieper intended it should be, to the four-foot line, it is certainly not to be extended, as there is danger of its being done, to the five-foot line. The caesura in English five-foot verse has always been weak since its introduction by Chaucer. His caesura is no caesura at all in the French sense of the term. All modern English verse shows the same tendency to do away with the organic character of the caesura. In many cases it is evident that none at all is intended, and, when found, it is light and capricious. The caesura is not, then, an organic or structural pause in English

⁷⁰ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 15.

heroic verse. This may be verified by reading a hundred lines of any standard English poem, wherein the effects of enjambement and of the rhetorical and syntactical relations will be found to reduce the pause to its lowest terms.

Perhaps the most striking proof, however, of the non-organic character of the caesura in English is found in some of the verse of the sixteenth century, where the pause is wholly and ridiculously mechanical, and quite independent of the real rhythm of the line, which everywhere runs counter to the forced caesura and shows, by this very opposition, the absurdity of a strictly marked pause in English verse. Gascoigne's allusion to the woodenness of contemporary verse is proverbial; ⁷¹ his own lines in the *Steel Glas* ⁷² furnish the best illustrations of that woodenness. Here the caesura is uniformly marked by a comma after the second foot whether the pause really occurs there or not; and in many cases this is done with such complete disregard of syntactical or any other relations as to separate the parts of speech themselves from their proper connections:

When tinkers make, no more holes than they founde,
When thatchers thinke, their wages worth their worke,
When colliers put, no dust into their sacks,
When maltmen make, us drink no firmentie,
When millers, toll not with a golden thumbe,
When bakers make, not barme beare price of wheat,
When brewers put, no bagage in their beere,
When butchers blowe, not over al their fleshe.

Steel Glas. Ed. Arber, v, 79.

The method seems to reach the limit of absurdity in the line,

Then wil I do, it for the vertues sake.

Ibid., p. 69.

⁷¹ Cf. *Certain notes of Instruction*, Ed. Arber, v, 33.

⁷² Ed. Arber, Vol. v.

Examples of this sort ought to convince the most skeptical that the English line of ten syllables has no real organic pause. The four-foot line tends to break into halves; but the cleavage is accomplished at the sacrifice of the fixed rhythm of the metrical scheme, and is not noticeable, or at least at its minimum, in the well-built octosyllable. It is going too far to assert that, after a pause of such slight importance, the reader has the sense of beginning a new and independent line. Since the remodeling of the old freely rhythmical Anglo-Saxon line, under the influence of Latin and French metrical schemes, into the stricter metres of English verse, the line, and not the half-line, has been the unit. Sieper's admiration, then, for the indiscriminate use of the direct attack after the caesura, does not appear to be well-founded, even in the octosyllable.

Admitted, then, that the feature is a fault but that it undoubtedly appears once in a while, it remains either to offer some excuse for the license, or to explain it away.

In the first place, then, there are, in fact, a few cases where it is justifiable. These occur after a very heavy caesura, amounting to a full stop and giving to the second part of the line the character of a fresh start. Such cases are not to be confounded with the usual caesural pause that Sieper claims special emphasis for in the short line; on the contrary, they are rare, and used only for dramatic effect. They are, therefore, most frequent in dramatic poetry, and Shakespeare's lines, tabulated by Abbott, abound in them.⁷³ The examples are frequently cited for other purposes and the scansion proposals will not always stand. The dramatic pause is the obvious solution in most cases. Robertson (p. 365, note) thinks such lines are "really imperfect" and that Shakespeare was trying a rhythmical experiment. The simple and natural explanation of the dramatic pause does not seem to have occurred to either Abbott or Robertson.

Here the pause necessitated by the sense or structure of the

⁷³ Cf. Abbott, §§ 482, 484, 506, 507, 508.

sentence supplies the place of the missing syllable. Chaucer makes rare but always effective use of this legitimate method. A good illustration is the following line:

Qy la? quod he. || Péter! it am I.

B 1404.

Cases of this sort abound in the verse of the Tradition, and the proper scansion gets rid of a number of examples used against the Chaucerians. A single example from Lydgate will show what many would call a defective line:

Ne shal be left. || só we shal refourme.

Temple. 858.

A slightly different form is illustrated by the following line:

And lo! || this was alther firste

Blaunche. 1172.

In the *Globe Edition* the editor inserts *the* before *alther*; but the rhetoric of the line fully justifies its omission, and it does not occur in any manuscript.

Still another variation is that where a parenthetical phrase or clause forms the second part of the line. This parenthesis is common in some of Chaucer's verse where the verse-tag abounds, and furnishes excuse for the same liberty in Lydgate, who is much given to such padding. Two lines from *Blaunche* illustrate the form and show what example the Chaucerians had to follow:

Was fals; || whiche a fool she was.

Blaunche. 733.

I was right yong || sóth to say.⁷⁴

Blaunche. 1089.

A slightly different form, but founded on the same principle, appears in connection with the feminine caesura when the

⁷⁴ Skeat thinks *the* was omitted before *soth*; but l. 1180 reads, *Now have I told the || soth to saye*, and the formula usually omits the article.

rhetoric of the sentence demands a pause after the caesural word. This rhetorical pause takes the place of the arsis, and the second part of the line begins with the thesis. The form is very rare.⁷⁵ I find one example that illustrates it satisfactorily. This occurs in Hoccleve:

He to hym seide || For God þat dyde.

Regement, St. 450, l. 4.

The preceding examples must have made it clear that the poets of the Tradition had in Chaucer's work good precedent for omitting the thesis after a heavy caesura. It is going too far to expect them to handle such a dangerous device with the skill of the master.

The crux now appears in the existence of lines where none of the explanations just offered will apply. Here we are forced to one of three conclusions: (1) That Chaucer's disciples had a precedent in his own lines. (2) That apparent cases are really not such at all but can be satisfactorily explained away. (3) That the C-type actually exists. By destroying the first conclusion and establishing the second, it is hoped to eliminate the third.

(d) Chaucer's use of the C-type.

It will probably remain ever doubtful if Chaucer really used the C-type. Personally, I find it difficult to believe that his keen sense of rhythm could have tolerated such an unrhythmic effect, and I think the examples brought forward are altogether inadequate to establish the fact. It is true that even Skeat found himself obliged to admit several lines of this type;⁷⁶ but his examples are by no means convincing. The first,

⁷⁵ Shakespeare has numerous examples. See Abbott, §§ 507, 508.

⁷⁶ Cf. *The Oxford Chaucer*, VI, § 110.

My tale is doon || fór my witte is thynne,

E 1682.

seems to fall into the class of legitimate types on account of the parenthetical nature of the second part of the line. The second example,

I meene of Mark Mathew Luc and John,

B 2141.

is a glaring example of the scribal omission of *e* after *Mark*, and four manuscripts, as Skeat himself tells us, have a tag after the *k*. Why he "fears it can hardly be justified" is hard to say. The third example,

Gooth, bryngeth forth the vesselles, quod he,

B 3384.

scans easily if *vesselles* is made trisyllabic, and two manuscripts, *Corpus* and *Landsdowne*, so make it. The fourth example,

And Hermanno and Thymalao,

B 3535.

can be justified in several different ways. First, it may be, as I think it is, a case of initial direct attack.⁷⁷ Again, the *r* of *Hermanno* may have syllabic value. This is not likely, but Boccaccio has *Herennianus* and *Heremianus*, and Chaucer's form is shortened in spelling but may have retained an original pronunciation, *Heremanno*. Tyrwhitt put it *Heremanno*.⁷⁸

The conclusion seems a safe one that the evidence produced is not sufficient to prove that Chaucer used the C-type. That his followers may have mistaken lines like those just quoted as examples of the monstrosity, is quite another matter. That they were familiar with the usages by which those lines were explained, will become apparent in the next section. Mean-

⁷⁷ Cf. Freudenberger, p. 17, who furnishes similar examples.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

while, the first conclusion, that Chaucer set the example, may be laid aside as not proved.

(e) Apparent cases of the C-type:

It is plain that an intelligent investigation of the C-type must begin with some knowledge of the resources that the versifier had at hand for lengthening his line. We have seen that the devices for keeping it within the norm of syllables were many, and that he used them too often and with little skill. The same condition may be expected to prevail in the opposite direction, and so, indeed, one finds it. The several methods of lengthening the word must be discussed separately.

(a) Diaeresis.

The simplest and most obvious method of lengthening the line is that of ordinary diaeresis, by means of which words of a single syllable in prose may be made dissyllabic in verse; those of two, trisyllabic; and so on. This device was used by Chaucer and his followers.

Some notable examples from Chaucer are: ¹⁹ *kneës* (*Troilus* III, 1592; B 1719); *treës* (*Fame* II, 244); *feës* (*Blaunche* 266); *creäture* (G 49; *Fame* III, 275; *Blaunche* 19; etc.). The word last-mentioned is of peculiar interest because of its frequent use not only in Chaucer but in the work of his followers. Its possibilities are well illustrated in the line,

The creätour of every creäture.

G 49.

Peculiar forms are *fairyes* (D 872) and *Oënone* (*Troilus* I, 654).

Gower is quite as liberal as Chaucer in this matter, particularly in the case of proper nouns. In addition to common

¹⁹ Cf. Ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 206, note; § 267; Kittredge, *Observations on the Language of Chaucer's Troilus*, § 141.

forms such as *Tesëus*, *Pelëus*, *Terëus*, appear the rather extraordinary *Saül*, *Isaac*, *Moïses*, and even *Caldeë*, *Judeë* and *Galileë*.⁸⁰

The Chaucerians made the most of the notable examples. Lydgate writes *treës* (Pilgrimage 11152); *virtuës* (*Reson* 503); *creäture* in very many places. The last-mentioned word is frequent in Hoccleve and in Hawes. Gower's treatment of proper nouns seems to have influenced Lydgate, who writes *Esaü*⁸¹ (Pilgrimage 5275, 5297, 5300). In 5300 the rhyme is *Esaü*: *virtu*; so it is again in 5309-5310. *Esawÿs* appears in 5280.

In the matter of diaeresis, then, the poets of the Tradition enjoyed great freedom and may be expected to have taken the fullest advantage of it.

Later poets have been equally liberal. Shakespeare, for instance, furnishes a number of interesting examples: *leöpard* (1 Hen. VI, I, 5, 31); *creäture* (1 Hen. VI, I, 6, 4); *pleäsure* (Timon I, 2, 151); *oceän* (MV I, 1, 8); *sergeänt* (Macbeth I, 2, 3); *soldiër* (J.C., IV, 1, 28; Lear, IV, 5, 3); *anciënt* (Lear, V, 1, 32); etc., etc.

Milton habitually makes *Michael* trisyllabic (PL VI, 202; VI, 411; XI, 466; XII, 466) and treats *Raphael* and *Gabriel* in similar fashion (PL V, 561; VI, 363; VII, 40) in spite of the indignant protests of the superior Bentley, who proposed ludicrous emendations, after the manner of more recent metrists.

(β) Final *e*.

A second important factor in lengthening the line is the final *e*. It is not proposed to enter into a discussion of the survival of that momentous letter during the Chaucerian period. Recent editions and monographs, notably the several volumes of Lydgate and Hoccleve in the publications of the Early English Text Society, have atoned, in a measure, for the sins

⁸⁰ Cf. Macauley, *Gower*, II, cxxv; EETS. Ext. Ser.

⁸¹ Cf. Furnivall, EETS. Ext. Ser. 77, XII.

of careless and unrhythmical scribes, and have succeeded in putting the texts upon a readable basis. It is important to summarize the results of this recent work.

Dr. Schick says of Lydgate: "The final *e* is sounded by Lydgate nearly in all cases in which Chaucer sounds it."⁸² In most instances I am inclined to read it as a full syllable⁸³ Lydgate still pronounced the final *e* or the *e* in unaccented inflexional syllables in the main as Chaucer and indeed even Orm pronounced it. Thus Lydgate decidedly stands in point of language, as in everything else, on the medieval side of the great gulf that intervenes between Chaucer and the new school of poetry that arose in the sixteenth century."⁸⁴ Dropping of final *e*, we are told, gradually led to "a phase in the language in which double forms, with mute or sounded *e*, were allowed and used to a great extent in poetry. This is already the case in Chaucer and even more so with Lydgate and his followers."⁸⁵

Miss Loeck decides of the *Pilgrimage* that though Lydgate "generally followed the same rules as Chaucer he allowed himself more liberty. Especially was this the case with regard to polysyllabic words, in which he was accustomed to *sound or to elide the final e according to the requirements of the metre, irrespective of other consideration*. When a final *e* preceded the caesura he allowed himself an equal amount of liberty, and when it occurred in this position would frequently sound an *e* that according to the rules should have been silent, or omit to sound one which we should have expected him to pronounce. The freedom he allowed himself in these respects was occasionally extended to other words in other positions, and we thus

⁸² EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, lxiii.

⁸³ *Ibid.* LXV, note 2. On p. lxiii Schick explains that he has refrained from adding *e*'s at the end of the line and at the caesura *even where he believes Lydgate would have sounded them*. This he has done to preserve the readings of the Tanner ms. Cf. Sieper, EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 18, note.

⁸⁴ Schick, p. lxxiii.

⁸⁵ Schick, p. lxxiv.

see the beginning of the NE pronunciation more clearly indicated in Lydgate than in Chaucer.”⁸⁶

Dr. Sieper's work on *Reson and Sensuallyte* confirms Miss Locock's results in every particular, and indicates extreme freedom in handling the final *e*,⁸⁷ although Sieper is a bit disinclined to admit as much. Nevertheless, the fact that he feels the truth of it is demonstrated by his own admission that he recognizes Lydgate's evident disinclination to the clashing together of accented syllables, and his tendency to use the final *e* to avoid such catastrophes.⁸⁸

The extraordinary percentage of hiatus in some of Lydgate's work,⁸⁹ and its frequency in Hoccleve⁹⁰ are among the best evidences not only of the persistence but of the strength of the final *e* after Chaucer. Hoccleve's extension of its syllabic use in *hire* and *here*,⁹¹ contrary to Chaucer's usage, is another indication of its preservation as a factor in the metric. Altogether it seems quite safe to accept Miss Locock's canon as the proper one for the entire period of the Tradition.

Unfortunately, critical texts of Hawes's poems are still lacking, and the *e* for his period remains shrouded in mystery. The *Pastime of Pleasure*, however, sheds some light on the problem. Although no manuscript is known to exist, the printed texts are of considerable value. E. A. Burkart's study, *Stephen Hawes's The Pastime of Pleasure* (London, 1899), promised a "proposed new edition of the text," which, as far as I know, is yet to materialize. Chapter VI, on Hawes's treatment of the final *e* and *e* in unaccented syllables, is singularly inadequate. His conclusion (p. 49) that Hawes, "unlike Chaucer and Lydgate, does not as a rule sound final *e* or *e* in unaccented syllables" is altogether misleading. Hundreds of

⁸⁶ EETS. Ext. Ser. 92, xxxiv. The italics are my own.

⁸⁷ EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 20 ff.

⁸⁸ Sieper, p. 18.

⁸⁹ Glauning, EETS. Ext. Ser. 80, xxiii, gives the percentage in the two *Nightingale Poems* as 65 ll. out of 81. Cf. Sieper, Ext. Ser. 89, p. 10.

⁹⁰ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 61, xlii; 72, xx.

⁹¹ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 61, xli; 72, xx; Bock, p. 22.

lines, unreadable without *e*, become perfectly regular with it, and the fact that the letter appears even in the black-letter of Wynkyn de Worde in 1509 is not without significance. All verse did not fare so well at the hands of contemporary printers. In the present standard text (Percy Society xviii, 1846) the *e* is available in most cases where it is needed. Even the careless reader will find lines where its pronunciation restores the line to metrical regularity. Who, for example, would contend that the line,

Over my grave in came dame Fame,

208, 9.

was intended to be read with three resounding nasal monosyllables at the close? I have not the least doubt that Hawes read it,

Over my grave in came damè Fame.

A few other examples of this poet's use of the final *e* will not be amiss here. From a host of examples I select the following: *tymè*, 215, 8, 18, 19, 20, 21; *samè*, 105, 12; *holè*, 106, 18; *swetè*, 108, 13; 201, 12; *nosè*, 109, 14; *wyttè*, 110, 8; 110, 16; *devoydè*, 182, 19; *easeè*, 184, 23; *aroseè*, 184, 24; *sunneè*, 189, 8; *walkè*, 189, 22; *selfè*, 191, 6; *wonneè*, 191, 7; 193, 8; *hiè*, 194, 12; *joyè*, 194, 14; *goldeè*, 196, 26; *comè*, 197, 2; *beddè*, 199, 16.

Hundreds of other examples can be found throughout the poem. In fact, the *Pastime*, strikingly archaic and artificial in all respects, is nowhere more so than in its frequent use of the final *e*. It is probably one of the most convincing examples we possess of the preservation for metrical purposes of a linguistic feature long since discarded in prose.

That Sir Thomas Wyatt, in the first half of the sixteenth century, still availed himself rather freely of the archaism, cannot be doubted.⁹²

⁹² See my examples in Chapter V, based on the transcript of the Egerton ms. given by Flügel in *Anglia* xviii, 263 ff., 455 ff.; xix, 175 ff., 413 ff. Schipper (*Metrik* II, 93) gives a few examples. Not all of them will stand, and all are based upon the mangled text of *Tottel's Miscellany*. Saintsbury (*Prosody* I, 305, 306) admits Wyatt's use of the final *e*.

That a few of the many forms of the atonic *e* persisted into Elizabeth's time is proved by the syllabic use of archaic forms in Shakespeare.⁹³

This evidence leads to two important conclusions: (1) That the Chaucerians used or dropped the final *e* when and where they chose, the requirements of metre being their only guide. (2) That the final *e* persisted as a metrical possibility long after it had ceased to be used in prose or even printed in the verse itself. We are, then, justified in supplying it where the metre requires it, where it is obviously intended by the poet and quite as obviously dropped by the printer or scribe, to whom it could have no value.⁹⁴

(c) *Syllabic l and r.*

A third factor, of less importance, in regularizing the defective lines, is the use of syllabic *l* or *r*. Although it is rather uncertain if any clear examples of this use exist in Chaucer or in his followers, it seems probable that the syllabic value of the liquids may have been taken advantage of by them. Later poets seem to have done so. Wyatt uses *r* in this fashion in several lines. Abbott (§§ 477, 480) gives many examples from Shakespeare. Not all will stand, for dramatic pause is the frequent solution of the lines; but enough remains to justify the use for Elizabethan poetry.

(d) *The Palatal Vowel i.*

A fourth means of lengthening is found in the syllabic possibility of the palatalized *g*. This became *i* in Middle English and seems to preserve its identity in a few words, such as *daei*,

⁹³ See Abbott, §§ 487, 488, 489.

⁹⁴ Cf. Sieper, EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 18, note; Shick, EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, LXIII. Sieper sensibly adds the *e* at the caesura because he knows Lydgate would never have stood sponsor for the dreadful type C. Shick wanted to add *e*'s but thought it more important to give the Tanner MS. unchanged. Yet he used the faulty Tanner in collecting his famous C's. This is hardly doing justice to the Monk of Bury.

vaci in Early Middle English. To words of this class were added others with a palatal vowel *i* from Old French sources, such, for example, as *saynt*, or *saint*⁹⁵ from *sanctum*. The group of words with palatal *i* had thus considerable body. Chaucer's use of the vowel as a separate syllable is illustrated in the following lines:

And ran to London unto seȳnt Powles.

Prol. 509.

That seȳnt Peter hadde whan that he wente.

A 697.

Jesus Crist and seȳnt Benedight.

A 3483.

(e) *Restoration of Obscured Syllables.*

The fifth and last resource in straightening out defective lines is the restoration of obscured syllables. The extremely common elision of the final vowel of a word before a word beginning with a vowel was expressed by the orthography even in cases where it was not intended in pronunciation, and where the mere restoration of the missing vowel gives a smooth line. Similarly, the common assimilation in *thys ys*, which becomes *thys*, caused the scribe to write *thys* where *thys ys* is essential to proper scansion. Cases of both kinds are found in Lydgate's *Pilgrimage*:

Lyk tamyghty champyoun,

Pil. 1766.

should read,

Lyk to a myghty champyoun.

Tal pylgrymes in ther myscheff.

Pil. 7150.

should read *To al*. A most peculiar line of this sort is *Pilgrimage* 2385 which runs,

In ta pulpet that ther stood.

⁹⁵ Cf. ten Brink, *Language and Metre*, § 242.

It should, of course, be amended into *In to a . . .* etc. In like manner the line,

Tarme a man in chastyte,

Pil. 7778.

becomes *To arme . . .* etc. As a final example of this misleading orthography, the line *Pilgrimage* 1758 will suffice. It reads,

Thys horned best and tenchase.

Examples of the second kind are numerous. The line,

That ye be thys no fable,

Pil. 2047.

looks very much like the famous C-type until restoration makes it run, with direct attack,

*Thát ye be thys ys no fable.*⁹⁶

Another line seems to have initial direct attack until the solvent is applied:

Thys to seyne in your werkyng.

Pil. 2701.

Thys ys to seyne in your werkyng.

It appears, then, that a good many tests must be applied to an apparently defective line before it is finally classified as such, and that it has many chances of escape from that unenviable category. Few editors, however, have gone the length of applying all the tests here catalogued. An examination of Lydgate's lines in the defective class illustrates this fact.

⁹⁶ Furnivall (EETS. Ext. Ser. 77, XII) says "*thys* is emphatic," and so explains the ictus upon it.

(f) An Examination of Lydgate's C-type.

Lydgate's verse, bearing, as it does, the reputation of abounding in defective lines, should be carefully studied for that phenomenon the C-type. After having brought together the various lines cited by the editors of the *Temple of Glas*, *The Pilgrimage of Man*, *The Assembly of Gods*, and the two *Nightingale Poems*, and after having tried those lines by the tests given above, I have come to the conclusion that the percentage of lines of the C-type in Lydgate has at least been grossly exaggerated, and that perhaps the feature does not exist there at all.

The examples given by Triggs from the *Assembly* (EETS. Ext. Ser. 69, p. xvi) can all be read as regular pentameter when the final *e* is given its value and the use of ictus on secondary accents is not forgotten. The *Assembly*, then, which has, by the way, a looser line than any of Lydgate's other works, if indeed it be Lydgate's, may be dismissed from the category.

Of the other lines, at least two seem to have nothing the matter with them:

And ás for him I wil bene his borow: morów.

Temple 1145.

Hath héven ánde yerth fórméd with a thóght.

Nightingale C 123.

In the *Temple* appear the majority of the troublesome lines, and upon the citation by Schick from that poem rests largely the unfortunate reputation of the Monk of Bury. It appears, however, that the editor has used the *Tanner* ms. as the basis for his edition, and that many of the lines defective in that manuscript are entirely regular in others. Yet they are classified, without comment, as defective. A few examples will illustrate the danger of this method. Schick gives *Temple* 63 as belonging to the C-type; it reads in *Tanner*,

How that she was falsed of Iason,

and certainly does not look like a five-foot line; but in ms. G (University Library, Cambridge) written in 1430 and remarkable in several respects (see Schick *xxi* ff.), the line is,

How thát she wás Ifálsid óf Iasón,

and, as such, may be read with perfect regularity. The same method is pursued in the case of *Temple* 127, which runs in *Tanner*,

Of Vulcanus and with Venus found,

but in ms. B (Bodleian), written about 1470-1480 (see Schick *xx*), the line is regular:

Of Vulcanus and with Venus I founde.

A striking example of this method is *Temple* 849, which Schick classes among the C-types and reads from *Tanner*,

Toward this man ful benygne- ,

in spite of the fact that four manuscripts, F, B, L, and S, and the prints make it,

Towárdes thís man fúl benýgne- .

Other examples of the method are ll. 767, 1028, 1141, 1150.

A number of lines classified under the head of the C-type are really cases of *initial* direct attack. Such are, *Temple*: 434, 485, 579, 580, 794, 845, 911, 1005, 1049, 1261, 1270, 1373; *Nightingale* c: 122, 127; *Reson*, 503 (*vertues* is, of course, trisyllabic); *Pilgrimage*, 321.

The class of lines brought to the norm by sounding the palatal vowel is not large, but interesting. Examples are:

The wých daý nor nýht ne slépte.

Pil. 340.

And so as *Mái*^x hath the souvereinte.

Temple 255.

That I ne *máy*^x shortli in a clause.

Temple 536.

And seid Allas what thing *mái* this be.

Temple 567.

Or merciles that I *mái* be grave.

Temple 1039.

Sith noon but she *máy* thi sorès sound.

Temple 1200.

Schick's scansion of the last line illustrates the complete lack of rhythm in the so-called "sense-doctrine" of scansion. He makes it:

Sith nóon but shé máy thi sofes soúnd.

The proper reading of *Temple 905*,

For spéchelés nóthing *máíst* thou spéde,

seems impossible to avoid, yet Schick puts it among the C-types. So he does *Temple 592*, wherein the etymology of *agein* (A-S. *ongean*) might have set him straight. The line reads, perhaps,

To grúch agéiñ; for of this bataile.

It is possible, however, to put it in the class of legitimate post-caesural direct attack because of the full stop in the middle of the line. It would then read,

To grúch ageín; fór of thís bataíle.

A number of apparently defective lines can be made regular by the simple expedient of sounding the final *e*. Lydgate's habit of using the *e* wherever the metre requires it has been mentioned before. Lines like the following show that only the *e* is needed for regularity:

And othir ekè that for poverte.

Temple 159.

That ye youre sonè of his deite.

Temple 836.

If eny woordè in the be myssaide.

Temple 1398.

The last line has peculiar interest. Schick prints it from *Tanner*, the oldest and in many respects the best of the manuscripts, but classifies it among his famous C's, perhaps on account of the hiatus involved in sounding the *e*. Lydgate would have no scruples on that score. With his line compare l. 3187 of *The Romans of Partenay* (EETS. 22),

Fro *wurdè* unto wurd, And [—]sithen hym said.

Other examples of sounded *e* are: *Temple*: *ekè*, 246; *humbèli*,⁹⁷ 491; *hadè*, 578; *forthè*, 942; *mekèli*, 1084; *havè*, 1328.

Study of the lines that still remain apparently without thesis after the caesura reveals the fact that the majority of them may be straightened out by supplying the missing *e*, probably omitted by the scribe. A very clear case of such omission is the line,

Al the whyl that I dwelle.

Pil. 2034.

This line Miss Locock could not assign to any type, not even the C-type.⁹⁸ With direct attack and the addition of the missing *e* it becomes,

Al the whylè that I dwelle.

Another obvious emendation is that of the line,

With-uten eny flatrye.

Pil. 1504.

⁹⁷ Lydgate constantly puts unaccented syllables in the arsis. Cf. Schick, p. lx.

⁹⁸ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 92, xl.

Here the editor again expressed her helplessness. The line should, of course, be amended to

With-outen eny flaterye,

a reading justified both by the normal spelling and by the syllabic character of the *r*. Another simple emendation is to be made in *Temple* 689, where *doumb* becomes *doumbè*, as, indeed, it appears in Berthelet's print (See Schick xxx). The reading *forthè* is justified in *Reson* 5980, by *Temple* 942, and by *Handlynge Synne* 351. The latter runs,

Pers seyð Late me *furthè* go.

The change of *wher* to *wherè* in *Reson* 741 is justified by Chaucer's dissyllabic use of *where*. Cf. D 2052, in which the rime is *wherè* : *erè*; *erè* is dissyllabic, as in D 636. In *Temple* 1395 *al* may be made *allè*, since it is plural, as in *Blaunche* 141. *Masounry* in *Pil.* 335 should be read *masounryè*; cf. *Rose* 302, where the rime is *masonryè* : *Enryè*; the word is from OF. *maconnerie* < Late Latin *massoneria*. Other additions of *e*, which require no explanation, are as follows: *Temple*, *wilè*, 913; *thoughtè*, 1106, 1368; *Pilgrimage*, *wynè*, 2229; *ekè*, 3979; *Reson*, *Westè*, 968; *Nightingale* c, *wechè*, 31; *wachè*, 34; *droghè*, 85.

There now remain unexplained only a few cases of the so-called C-type. Two of these,

And ther withal Venus as me thought,

Temple 848.

And ther withal lich as ye perseyve,

Temple 1030.

may be made regular by permitting the syllabic use of *l*. Two others seem to belong to the class of genuine post-caesural direct attack justified by the parenthetical character of the second part of the line, and are similar to Chaucer's line,

My tal is doon, for my witte is thynne.

E 1682.

The two lines from Lydgate are,

He made A-noon (thys, the cheff).

Pil. 3981.

Whan this is doon | ferthermore in dede.

Secrees 167.

A third line, similar to these, cannot be explained in the same way, and we are forced to suppose that the original reading was *anone*. This is historically justified, of course, and satisfies the metrical requirement. The line then reads,

And than anone Venus cast adoune.

Temple 503.

Two lines now remain of the many brought together by Lydgate's editors as evidences of the C-type. There seems to be no way of restoring them to the normal length, and I believe they were written as four and three-foot verses respectively. They are:

Enbrouded was as men myght se.

Temple 309.

ffond unto hys plesaunce.

Pil. 351.

Verses that fall short of the normal length were not unknown to Lydgate in earlier English poetry. The *Rose* furnished at least two lines of this sort:

Drawyng such folk hym too.

Rose 3885.

He hateth all trechours.

Rose 3895.

The poetry before Chaucer, and the popular divided septenar in particular, must have had a strong influence here.

However unsatisfactory this consideration of Lydgate's apparently defective lines may seem, it has at least developed the fact that in very many cases there is a possibility of escape from the C-type. The list investigated may be taken as representative of Lydgate's faulty lines, although it is, of course, by no means exhaustive. Lydgate is, however, notably the chief, if not the sole offender in the matter of the C-line, and if the probability of the existence of that line has been lessened for Lydgate, it may safely be dismissed from all the verse of the Chaucerian Tradition.

CHAPTER III.

ACCENTUATION.

I. THREE DOCTRINES OF SCANSION.

Perhaps the most difficult problem of the verse of the Chaucerian Tradition is that of its accentuation. About no other thing has there been so great diversity of opinion, so many inconsistencies in explanation, and such general dissatisfaction with the results. And yet the confusion and misapprehension seem to be the direct result of one fundamental error: Almost without exception, the modern canons of scansion have been applied to verse whose whole aim and purpose is remote from those of modern poetry.

The attempt has been made to read both ancient and modern verse in conformance to that system known as the *sense-doctrine*, according to which a line of poetry must be read as if it were prose, and modern prose at that, with the ordinary prose intonations and accents. Stated another way, and with reference to older poetry, the idea is that medieval verse, as well as all other verse, ought to "satisfy the modern ear." As if the "ear" did not change with all things else! To this heresy many have committed themselves, and the application of the doctrine has yielded appropriate results.

Masson, who applied the canon to Milton, says: "On the whole, then, it is best to assume that strictly metrical effects are pretty permanent; that what was agreeable to the English metrical sense in former generations is agreeable now, and that, even in verse so old as Chaucer's, one of the tests of the right metrical reading of any line is that it shall satisfy the present ear. . . . The proper way of reading poetry is not to *impose* the music upon the lines, but to let the music of each line *arise* out of it as it is read naturally. Only in this way can

we know what metrical effect Shakespeare or Milton anywhere intended. . . . The right way of scanning Milton's verse is to read it freely and naturally, as we should read verse of our own day, subject only to a few transmitted directions, and to register the actual results as well as we can in metrical formulae."¹

On this principle, which, by the author's own confession, "of course leaves room for difference, as no two readers will read alike," (!) Mr. Masson scans the first twenty-six lines of *Paradise Lost* and finds "only two or three lines normal, and great variety in the construction of the rest."² Among these varieties he mentions the Trochee, the Spondee, the Pyrrhic, the Anapaest, and the Antibacchius. In the words of a classic scholar dealing with a metrist of the same school, "As though there could be any talk of feeling in such a hodge-podge of heterogeneous feet, which makes of the poet's art a mere piece of mosaic jugglery instead of an organic growth and development from certain simple rhythmical forms."³

Not satisfied with mutilating the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*, the editor collects seventy examples from all of Milton's works and then proceeds to criticise them as follows: "All these lines might be rectified into Decasyllables by supposing elisions, slurs, or contracted utterances, and there are some who seem to favour such a practice. There could be no more absurd error." He then suggests the solution. "For three lines," we are told, "the Antibacchius comes to the rescue; for two lines the rarer Cretic is the solvent; this leaves thirty-five lines unaccounted for and in these the neatest (!) agent is the Amphibrach."⁴ That he is not quite sure of his own system is made clear by these words: "The introduction of a trisyllabic foot is apt to cause a disturbance even in the rest of the fabric

¹ Masson, David, *The Poetical Works of John Milton*, London, 1890, Vol. III, pp. 114, 115.

² Masson III, 116.

³ G. L. Hendrickson, *AJPh.* xx, 210. A review of C. E. Bennett's *What was Ictus in Latin Prosody?* first printed in *AJPh.* xix, No. 4.

⁴ Masson III, 123.

of the line, made up as it is of dissyllabic feet with their accents. Hence some of the lines quoted require a very peculiar scanning apart from the inserted trisyllabic foot. Some of them, indeed, would not pass for blank verse at all if they stood by themselves, and are such only when fused into the music of the context.”⁵ As examples these lines are cited:

Plant óf the field which ere it was on the Éarth.

Over fish of thé sea ánd fowl óf the air.

The inquisitive student wonders how members of this school of Masson would scan other lines of Milton, such as these:

The fugitive bond-woman with her son.

PR II, 308.

And exquisitest name for which was drained.

PR II, 346.

Passion and apathy and glory and shame.

PL II, 564.

Their idolisms, traditions, paradoxes.

PR IV, 234.

Curiosity inquisitive importune.

SA, 775.

In the presence of the last-mentioned line Masson frankly confesses himself helpless. “If it is to be scanned at all,” he says (Imagine Milton’s opinion of this comment!), “it is by supposing an Anapaest in the first place, followed by a Tribrach in the second, a Trochee in the third, and then two Iambi.”⁶ Thus is necessity made the mother of invention.

Bentley, in 1732, scanning with similar ideas in mind, found many lines of *Paradise Lost* not to his taste.⁷ His comments are amusing:

Reigns here and revels; not in thé bought smile.

PL IV, 765.

⁵ Masson III, 123.

⁶ Masson III, 124.

⁷ Richard Bentley, *Milton’s Paradise Lost, A New Edition*. London, 1732.

"Here's a very bad accent, which makes the foot stumble and break its knee. If he could have revised it he would have given it thus or some other way: *in purchased smiles*."

In their triplé degrees—régions to which.

PL v, 750.

"Here's very halting measure here. The angels 'tis hoped kept better in their march."

Created thee in thé imáge of God.

PL VII, 527.

"This verse seems to have lost some of its entrails, it's so hollow. I believe he gave it.

Created thee in th' Image Thee of God."

The latest monumental work on English prosody falls into the same trap. The following statement is, for example, certainly misleading:

"In the great majority of (Chaucer's) words this 'accent' is mainly though not wholly identical with that of the present day, and it is not necessary for any decently bred modern Englishman who is acquainted with that *secret de Polichinelle* the value of the final *e* to accept any unfamiliar pronunciation in order to get the full metrical and rhythmical value of Chaucer's lines."⁸

Let the decently bred modern Englishman try to follow this simple method, and he will find out pretty soon that there is something the matter either with Chaucer or with himself, or,—and here we get thrillingly near the truth,—with his adviser.

The danger of such assertions lies in the fact that they state only half-truths. This one, for example, a striking instance of the inadequacy of the sense-doctrine, confuses poetry with prose and leaves partly or altogether out of account facts of the

⁸ Saintsbury, *History of English Prosody*, I, 176.

utmost necessity for intelligent scansion. It relegates to bare mention the free employment of words with French accent and the extremely flexible accentuation of proper nouns; both should be emphasized and the freedom of the poet in such matters stressed. It fails altogether to mention the frequent use of secondary accents in arsis and for rime, and the elevation of relational words usually unstressed to stressed position; yet this method has for years been acknowledged by scholars, although only recently put upon a solid foundation.

The classics have not been without scholars of the sense-doctrine school. Prof. Bennett argues against ictus in Latin prosody in these terms: "So far as we know, no language is ever forced to an artificial pronunciation when adapted to the service of poetry. It is irrational to conceive any such adaptation. The poet simply takes the choicer words of familiar speech and employs them in their ordinary equivalence with their regular pronunciation. He must do so, for his appeal is to the many, not to a select handful who may have been initiated into the secret trick of his versification. . . . Can any later poetry be cited in any language of which this is not true?"⁹ While there is a large element of truth here, the fault lies in overlooking the fact that the poet, with an ideal far removed from the utility of prose, may linger upon and emphasize delicate shades of accent slurred over in ordinary speech but by no means completely lost or obscured. In so doing he is not forcing upon his readers an "artificial pronunciation" but calling attention to accentual facts so familiar that their importance is apt to be under-valued.

The notion of the prosaic reading of verse is usually accompanied by the fallacy that what is the true reading for one period is in the main true for all. Yet a little search ought to bring forth evidence against such an idea. Canons of verse change with changing taste, and even words in prose shift their accent in the course of time. In 1582, for example, cultivated

⁹ Bennett, *What was Ictus in Latin Prosody?* AJPh. xix, 4, 361 ff. Cf. p. 366.

people said *imperative*, *cósmographie*, *órtographie*, "with many like. The ignorant pronounced *impérative*, *cosmógraphie*, yet that was not the true English pronunciation" ¹⁰ we are told by a scholar of the period. The same authority makes a plea that is not without bearing here. "We must request those grammatical precisians," says he, "that as every country hath its peculiar law, so they permit every language to use his particular lore." ¹¹ The particular lore of the Chaucerians was not the lore of the Victorian Age.

Kent's two lines near the end of *Lear* illustrate the danger of reading verse "naturally."

I have a journey sir, shortly to go;
My master calls me, I must not say no.

Lear v, 3, 322-323.

Lewis calls attention to the temptation to read these lines as four-stress verses with dactylic rhythm, and adds: "These lines as pronounced on the stage by an intelligent actor are entirely satisfactory; but in a modern poem addressed to readers rather than auditors, they would seem careless." ¹² The secret of their regularity in the mouth of an actor or elsewhere lies in the fact that they are read as part of a series of regular decasyllables and not isolated from their proper environment. In other words, knowledge of the scheme is essential to their proper reading, and only that knowledge saves the two lines from a break-down into tumbling verse. What is true of this example is true of very much verse in all periods of the literature. Only the strict enforcement of the metrical scheme can give the interpretation meant by the poet, and save the verse from chaos. "Natural" reading never does either. Consider, for example, the fate of rhythm when the following lines are read "naturally":

And Una wandering in woods and forests.

Spenser, *FQ* I, i, 9.

¹⁰ Stanyhurst, *Translation of Æneid*, p. 13.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Lewis, *The Principles of English Verse*, p. 28.

Of proud Lucifer, as one of the traine.

Ibid. I, iv, 37.

To drive away the dull melancholy.

Ibid. I, v, 3.

The Pardale swift, and the Tigre cruell.

Ibid. I, vi, 26.

With huge force and insupportable mayne.

Ibid. I, vii, 11.

In a green circular hollow in the heath.

Arnold, *Tristram* III, 7.

The blackbird whistled from the dingles near,

And the weird chipping of the woodpecker.

Ibid. III.

I contemplate with joy the shocks that the last forty lines of *Tristram* may be counted upon to give metrical Puritans. The rimes themselves are wicked!

That the ordinary modern popular or prose reading can never give satisfactory results, has been well expressed by Bridges in his monograph on Milton's prosody. He says:

"It is easy to see how the far-sought effects of the greatest master in any art may lie beyond the general taste. In rhythm this is especially the case; while almost everybody has a natural liking for the common fundamental rhythms, it is only after long familiarity with them that the ear grows dissatisfied and wishes them to be broken; and there are very few persons indeed who take such a natural delight in rhythm for its own sake that they can follow with pleasure a learned rhythm which is very rich in variety. . . . Some knowledge of the structure, or laws which govern such rhythm is necessary to most persons before they will receive them as melodious, and they will accept or reject a rhythm to which they are unaccustomed, according as they can or cannot perceive or think they perceive its structure."¹³

If these words had been written for the verse of the Tradition, they could not better state the point at issue.

¹³ Robert Bridges, *Milton's Prosody*, Oxford, 1894, p. 32.

The sense-doctrine has been weighed in the balance and found wanting because it disregards the metrical scheme and trusts to the utilitarian stresses of everyday speech to reveal the metrical subtleties of the poet. It remains to reckon with the so-called ictus-doctrine.

The canon of the ictus-doctrine, that verse shall confine its stresses uniformly and exclusively to the ictus-word, or syllable in the arsis, would make ridiculous much of the greatest poetry in the language. None would suffer more from such wooden scansion than the work of the period under discussion, and no system could be more foreign to a prosody whose syllabification shows at every point the strongest tendency towards rhythmical freedom. "Mere syllable-counting!" is the cry of this school when the verse of the Tradition is mentioned. From Chaucer to Wyatt this is the easy explanation of a peculiar system of metric. An examination of the facts quickly disproves the theory. Gower, who most nearly approaches syllabic rigidity, and who barely escapes the gentle insinuation that he, too, measured the verse on his fingers, shows the most decided accentual rhythm, not only in his English lines but even in the French verses of the *Mirour* and of the *Balades*. In this respect he differs from all contemporary English writers of French verse, most of whom took over the old English system into the Romance tongue.¹⁴ The same canon of criticism would make modern poets, too, syllable-counters, especially those poets with highly developed aesthetic sense, who have written the delicately harmonized lines that the orthodox can scan only by inverting and converting and diverting from the paths of metrical rightousness.

The fact that neither "sense" nor "ictus" systems gives the key to the verse of Lydgate, Occleve, Hawes, and their contemporaries, forces the theorist to the only available solution, the *rhythm-doctrine*, or, as Bright has humorously called it, "the common-sense doctrine."¹⁵

¹⁴ Macaulay, *Gower* I, xliv, lxxiv.

¹⁵ Bright, *PMLA*. xiv, 361.

By the rhythm-doctrine is meant the reading of poetry as poetry and not as prose; with due regard to the demands of the three threads of rhythm,—word-accent, rhetorical stress, verse-ictus. It is the proper valuation of each of these three interwoven strands that constitutes intelligent reading of verse. Most important of all is the preservation of the rhythm laid down in the metrical scheme, not as a mere subconscious impulse, but as an actual and ever present metrical factor, indicated and enforced by the recurrence at their proper intervals of the normally emphasized verse-ictuses.

When this verse-accent or ictus stands in conflict with word-accent, it is marked by *increased duration of the vocalic element under the ictus*, attended, in the majority of cases, but not necessarily, by *increase also of pitch*. The result is the addition to a weak syllable of length and of pitch-accent, which mark the ictus as adequately as an intensified primary stress would do.¹⁶

Time is, after all, the ultimate basis of rhythm, and stresses of various kinds, be they force-accents or pitch-accents, are the result of the mental effort to mark off temporal intervals of the same length, and not of any inherent craving of the mind for intensification. The tendency to lengthen a metrical syllabic element that does not fill up the space allotted to it in the line is as instinctive as the tendency to add stress to an element that fulfils the requirement of length. In the one case, *quantity* is added to an element that lacks it; in the other case, *stress* is added to indicate the temporal articulation. In both cases the effort is the same and the result is the same; namely, the adequate indication of rhythm. And it is obvious that the mere indication of length is sufficient to mark that rhythm.

In accentual tongues, however, length is usually accompanied, as, indeed, it has doubtless been produced, by increase of force or pitch. In verse there is a still stronger tendency to supplement length by stress of some sort. When a syllable

¹⁶ This theory was advanced by Bright (PMLA. xiv, pp. 365, 367) and developed by him in subsequent lectures.

short or atonic in prose comes under the arsis, the voice naturally gives it both length and stress; but the vocal effort spends itself in adding length; the stress is often of the slightest degree of intensity, and is an increase of pitch rather than of intensity; hence we call it a pitch-accent.¹⁷

In English verse, then, a syllable gets its quantity from its position in the line, and added length from position under arsis is merely the preservation or the emphasis of an original time-value. The longs and shorts of prose make little difference to the poet, who, usually in moments of exaltation or emotion of some other elevated character, lifts up and makes tense even the bare mechanism of his line by giving length to prose-slurred or shortened syllables, and by taking away length from prose-emphasized elements. There can be, then, no fixed rule of long and short syllables in English verse. Usage of the best poets indicates that fact.

Latin verse, by fixing quantities, evolved a fixed system of lengths, upon which its prosody was then based. It is interesting to surmise what would be the state of affairs in modern English verse if the prosody of Middle English times had perpetuated and fossilized the lengthening and emphasis of syllables with secondary accent, and of the articulative elements of speech. Once used systematically, these stresses are now capricious and sporadic; but they still exist, and that, too, in the best verse of the language.

To return now to our first statement, length, accompanied usually by increase of pitch rather than increase of intensity, is the adequate "stress" that marks a prose-weak word under the arsis.¹⁸ The sufficiency of such an accent for all metrical needs has long been recognized by students of rhythm. Meumann says: "Die Betonung ist endlich niemals bloss Intensi-

¹⁷ Cf. T. S. Omond, *English Metrists*, p. 221.

¹⁸ Hereafter the accent imposed by increase of duration, usually, but not necessarily, accompanied by increase of pitch, will be referred to as "pitch-accent." This is done for convenience and the lack of a better term. In the majority of cases its use is strictly accurate.

tätssteigerung, sondern stets auch Qualitätsveränderung der gesprochenen Laute, und zwar scheint in der Regel die zunehmende Tonhöhe für die Aufmerksamkeit des Hörenden und als Ausdrucksbewegung des Sprechenden dieselbe Bedeutung zu haben wie gesteigerte Intensität indem sie der Hervorhebung des logisch und emotionell Bedeutsameren dient."¹⁹

It is this addition of pitch to prose-weak words in the arsis that lifts them toward the level of words commonly bearing stronger emphasis. Every syllable in the line thus gets a greater or a less degree of emphasis than it would get in prose; words with heavy prose accents may find themselves in thesis with only their intrinsic stress to preserve them; words ordinarily weak are lifted from that status by pitch-accent in the arsis; the naturally emphatic stresses of the rhetoric of the phrase are either toned down in thesis where they, nevertheless, still sufficiently assert themselves, or get heightened importance in arsis. The result is a line with definitely marked rhythm, without suppression either of the usual word-accents or of the necessary rhetorical stresses; but characterized by an approach towards the liturgical monotone that differentiates it at once from the trip-hammer scansion of the ictus-doctrine and from the unrhythmical and chaos-making irregularity of the sense-doctrine.

The capabilities of this system for variation, and the several means it uses in employing pitch-accent have been pointed out by Bright and elaborately treated for Anglo-Saxon and for later English poetry in a series of studies under his direction.²⁰ All these develop the thesis originally laid down in Bright's first article, and all show the possibilities of utilizing the secondary accent and relational words ordinarily slurred over in prose. The phenomenon long known to German scholars

¹⁹ Meumann, Ernst, *Untersuchungen zur Psychologie und Aesthetik des Rhythmus*. Wundt's *Philosophische Studien* x, pp. 402, 403.

²⁰ Bright, *Proper Names* (1899); *Grammatical Ictus* (1901); Huguenin, *Secondary Stress in Anglo-Saxon* (1901); Brown, *Syllabification and Accent in Paradise Lost* (1901); Miller, *Secondary Accent in Modern English Verse* (1904); Melton, *Donne* (1906); Bright and Miller, *The Elements of English Versification*, Ginn & Co., 1910. Cf. §§ 40-47.

under the inaccurate and misleading title of *schwebende Betonung* has been put upon a sound philological basis; the artistic function of the articulative and subordinate, as well as of the substantive elements of the line has been pointed out; and a new and clear light has been thrown upon many problems of English verse that have confused scholars for generations.

The very simplicity of this principle seems to work its undoing. English metric has so long been the object of meticulous analysis that prosodists fight shy of any theory that appeals frankly and openly to common sense. So Alden is quite right in saying in his recent work²¹ that "most persons find this pitch-accent a difficult matter to understand." But this is a question of individual experience. Personally I find it far easier of comprehension and infinitely less difficult of application than the four over-lapping and contradictory principles laid down by Alden upon his preceding page. Of these the baffled student may exclaim with reason, "I can't see the woods for the trees!"

Nevertheless, Alden's statement is correct, as a recent work on metric²² sadly illustrates. Omond makes several statements that show his inability to grasp our idea. Of Bright's principle of resolved stresses he says: "He also rejects trisyllabic feet in strict heroic verse except after a pause, reducing them to dissyllables," etc. I trust my chapter on syllabification answers this statement. Again, Omond "does not know what 'essential laws of rhythm' require absolute uniformity of syllabic recurrence." I refer him to any treatise upon the essential of rhythm, especially to my own chapter upon accent. Still again, Omond can give other explanations for such "familiar instances as *rose-gardén* and *well-watér*." By all means let us have these other explanations, but I refuse to accept the easy refuge of "wrenched accent," which proves absolutely

²¹ R. M. Alden, *An Introduction to Poetry*. New York, Holt & Co., 1909. Cf. p. 173 ff.

²² T. S. Omond, *English Metrists*, Oxford University Press, 1907. Cf. p. 220 ff.

nothing. Finally, Omond cannot understand why initial inversion does not carry with it the right to invert any foot in the line. I have met that objection in my paragraphs on primitive trochaic rhythms. At least Mr. Omond can no longer assert of this doctrine that the "central position is always assumed, never established by argument."

II. THE RHYTHM-DOCTRINE AND THE CHAUCERIANS.

That the poets of the Chaucerian Tradition should have had this idea of metric seems inevitable; not at first glance, indeed, but after the history of the system they inherited has been carefully studied. For centuries English verse had been undergoing a process of remodeling by Latin and French influences. The first great and effectual force from without upon the irregular rhythm of Anglo-Saxon poetry came through the strict trochaic and iambic movements of the hymns of the Church.²³ This was the first school of form, already utilizing secondary accents for metrical purposes,²⁴ and demanding emphatic iteration of the verse ictus. The Latins had long since found out that subconscious rhythm was not strong enough to preserve the character of the line. Caesius Bassus says: "Iambic verse will seem to lose its character when it admits dactyls unless you so handle the rhythm by means of *percussio* that when you mark the time you strike the foot as an iambus." (Cf. *AJPh.* xx, 431.) To the Latin mould with its emphasis of the scheme, succeeded the French impress of stricter syllabification and a more "level" stress. English verse now had its second lesson, that of stricter care with its syllables and less regard for emphatic stresses. The time-honored doctrine that the French taught the English "syllable-counting" without reference to word-accent is still a source of heresy and schism. It is an open question, to begin with, that French verse is a

²³ Cf. W. P. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 199 ff.; Saintsbury, *Prosody*, I, 16; Miller, p. 15 ff.

²⁴ Miller, p. 17 ff.; cf. Ker, p. 206 ff.

mere matter of syllabification without accent. Some Frenchmen themselves deny that accusation. (Cf. Robertson, Appendix V, p. 367. The matter on p. 375, with quotations from Littré and Turgot is of peculiar interest.) Granted, however, for the sake of the argument, that French lines are without accent, would any Chaucerian, with the heavy stresses of native poetry still beating in his mind, have read foreign verse absolutely without accent? Does the average English reader of the present day read French poetry without accent? The history of verse (cf. Gower's method, mentioned above) and practical experiment both teach that the English mind imposes upon all verse, foreign as well as native, its own system of regular beats at regular intervals. (Cf. Kastner's *History of French Versification*, p. 304 ff.) It must have been so in Chaucer's time.

Meanwhile English verse never lost its national character. Although Anglo-Norman writers sometimes adopted the English native method, and wrote French octosyllables in two halves with a distinct caesura, four accents, and an indefinite number of syllables, Gower's French lines in the *Mirour* and the *Balades* are in a sense accentual as well as syllabic. They represent the combination of an unmistakable English rhythm with a strict French syllabification; in this they differ from contemporary English, French, and Anglo-Norman poetry.²⁵ English writers were, in fact, already prepared for the elevated style. Then came Chaucer and with him a return to a somewhat freer syllabification and important changes in the tradition of the metric. Without discarding the old system of stresses, he made artistic and conscious use, for definite aesthetic effects, of what had been, in the older verse, more or less crudely used, and often abused, devices. In his hands the already familiar methods of secondary accent were used with skill and delicacy; the musical Romance stresses were handled with an obvious eye to effect; pitch-accent upon relational words became a potent factor in securing elevation and dignity; most important of all, the line of all others best suited to the stately progress, the

²⁵ Cf. Macaulay, *Gower* I, xliv, lxxiv.

grand style, was wholly naturalized, and its possibilities developed. Chaucer thus introduced no radically new system of metric, but perfected a method that had been developing for centuries. This perfected system he handed on to his successors. In their hands it was not improved.

So far, the whole tendency of foreign influence upon English verse had been toward restriction and artificiality. The court poetry never lost this tradition, but rather fossilized it. After Chaucer the prosody shows a certain effort toward syllabic freedom, but, in every other respect, the only addition is in the direction of increased conventionality. The content keeps to well-worn medieval themes; the stanzaic form seldom escapes the traditional Rime Royal; the line is uniformly heroic for grave topics and octosyllabic for others. It was natural that, under these circumstances, the tradition of the line should have remained as Latin and French patterns, enforced by Chaucer's method, had left it—a grave and dignified recitative with a tendency toward suppression of the heavy stresses of prose, and a counter-tendency toward the elevation of light prose-stresses by means of pitch-accent. But some other reason must be sought for the increased artificiality of the prosody, for the persistence of archaisms presented by Chaucer, for the continued and exaggerated use of secondary accents, the abuse of emphasis upon relational words, in short, for the unique metric of the Chaucerian Tradition.

III. ORGANIC DIFFERENCE BETWEEN OCTOSYLLABLE AND DECASYLLABLE.

It is a matter of no small importance that the prosodic sins decried by the orthodox are as a rule committed in the decasyllable, and that the octosyllable has usually kept its serene, prose-accented way, free from the phenomena that characterize the longer line. This fact justifies us in confining our attention largely to the heroic line. The solution of its problems concerns not alone the whole period of the Chaucerian Tradition.

tion, but, with diminishing importance, all English verse down to modern times. Every age maintains the distinction in tone and function between the long line and the short. During the Tradition the difference seems especially well marked, but it is nowhere more distinct than in the poetry of Sir Thomas Wyatt, who begins a new era. His lighter verse, in the octosyllable, is remarkably modern in accentuation, while the graver sonnets and the psalms, in decasyllable, display the features of the versification of an earlier period.²⁶ All verse since Wyatt shows the same differentiation, perhaps less strongly emphasized.

For the Chaucerians, the excuse usually given is either that they were unfamiliar with the decasyllable and did not understand Chaucer's methods of using it, or that linguistic changes made havoc of the versification. This is said even of Gower, whose stanzas in the heroic line Schipper found less "regular" than the octosyllables.²⁷ Saintsbury expresses the usual opinion when he says: "The decasyllable was a very late comer to any considerable extent and was not un-mixedly lucky in the time and circumstances of its introduction. It had been brought in just as the great changes in regard to final *e* and other matters were beginning, and the result was that Chaucer's followers had to apply Chaucer's metre to pronunciation which was every day ceasing to be Chaucerian. The octosyllable, on the other hand, was of the most ancient house of distinctively English—that is Middle English—poetry. . . . It had from all but the earliest period adapted itself to the two systems, uniform and equivalenced, of syllabic metring. It was thus perhaps prepared to meet any change in pronunciation, any difficulties of form; its general rhythm being so planted in the English tongue and ear that nothing could drive it out or smother it."²⁸

Even if we allow ourselves to believe that the poets failed to observe and adapt themselves to linguistic changes obvious

²⁶ Cf. Chapter V.

²⁷ Schipper, *Metrik* I, 483 ff. Cf. Macaulay, *Gower* I, cxxi ff.

²⁸ Saintsbury, *Prosody* I, 229, 230.

to the most careless observer, we find it difficult to understand why these same changes alone would not have had precisely the same effect on lines identical in structure except for the difference of a single foot in length. When we find the same features of dissimilarity between eight and ten-syllable verse in Wyatt, Surrey, and far beyond, the inadequacy of the whole doctrine of unfamiliarity and linguistic change becomes apparent, and another explanation is rendered imperative. This, I believe, is offered by experimental psychology, and is based upon well-established facts concerning rhythmical grouping and periodic attention.

IV. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE DECASYLLABLE.

It is a well-known fact in the study of rhythm that the members of a series of simple rhythmical units (in verse, trochaic or iambic feet) tend when the series is prolonged to combine into larger units or groups of the smaller.²⁹ This grouping takes place in the Anglo-Saxon mind before six simple units are heard, and five simple units seems to represent the maximum length of the larger group. The addition of another unit or foot causes a grouping by threes. In other words, the line of five feet represents the extreme limit of an unorganized succession of simple feet. The octosyllable falls naturally into two two-foot groups; the alexandrine, into two three-foot groups; the septenar, into groups of four and three feet respectively.

Bolton found that this larger grouping usually takes place by twos.³⁰ This is apparent in the Anglo-Saxon line of two hemistichs, and explains, too, the frequent position of the caesura after the second foot in English poetry, even in the decasyllable. The octosyllable thus represents the primitive rhythmical arrangement of simple units.³¹ Thus constituted,

²⁹ Scripture, *op. cit.* 520, 521, 522.

³⁰ Bolton, *AJPsy.* VI, p. 223.

³¹ Cf. N. Triplett and E. C. Standford, *Studies of Rhythm and Metre*, *American Journal of Psychology* XII (1900-1901), p. 361 ff. An interesting

it is eminently adapted to simpler and lighter verse, and least likely to show features of artificiality. In it the tension produced by bending the language to the artificial curve of rhythm is reduced to its lowest point, and hence the octosyllable ought to show and does show the most "natural," that is, the most prosaic, accentuation.

The line of five feet, on the other hand, not only represents the extreme limit of an unorganized succession of simple units, but does not lend itself to the normal rhythmic grouping of those simple units into larger divisions. It thus hesitates between two natural impulses: on the one hand, it passes just beyond the primitively rhythmical two-grouped line of four simple units; on the other hand, it just escapes the primitively rhythmical grouping of the six-foot line. A third factor then appears in the demand of the line-structure or phrase-pattern, which enforces upon the poet a syllabic limit of ten units, and, at the same time, creates a tension which is not broken until the phrase is completed. The five feet, or five simple units, are, by the metrical scheme, made the measure of the phrase, and, until this phrase is completed, there is a tension due to both muscular and mental processes and felt even when a pause, such as the caesura, temporarily suspends the movement. Relaxation comes only when the condition has been satisfied.³² This demand, much less subconscious than the impulses toward rhythmical grouping, is the determining factor in preserving the integrity of the single foot. The tendency of the five-foot line, then, is to maintain the identity of each unit of its series of simple units, and to resist their consolidation into large groups.

This tendency is evident from the introduction of the line into the language. Chaucer found a rigid caesura in the French decasyllable. Unconsciously, perhaps, he gave it in the

study of primitive lines and stanzas. Cf. also Du Bois, *Stress Accent in Latin Poetry*, Macmillan, 1906, p. 41.

³² See R. H. Stetson, *A Motor Theory of Rhythm and Discrete Succession*. The Psychological Review XII, 1905, p. 315.

English decasyllable the entirely inorganic character that it has held to the present day. The varying position of the caesura in the English decasyllable is, then, an indication, not solely of the poet's skill, but of the natural result of forcing a new and non-primitive rhythm upon a verse that still feels the strictly primitive rhythm of the Anglo-Saxon period.

It is obvious that a line worked upon by the several opposing forces just mentioned must show some indication of the struggle. The decasyllabic line, from the standpoint of grouping, is distinctly a-rhythmic, and an a-rhythmic series is preserved only with difficulty. "A-rhythmic movements," says Scripture (p. 525), "have a constant tendency to become rhythmic, notwithstanding the voluntary effort of the subject to execute the movement at irregular intervals. The subjects of experiments³³ invariably agreed in confessing that the a-rhythmic tapplings required strenuous effort and that the performance was very fatiguing." This throws light on the problem of the a-rhythmic decasyllable, with its artificial tension produced by conflicting rhythmical and metrical forces. Bolton found the same difficulty with forced a-rhythmic groups made from a continuous series of auditory impressions that did not vary in pitch, intensity, or time of succession. After mentioning the unanimous tendency to group simple units by twos, and the disinclination of the mind to form larger groups, even when a positive effort was made, Bolton adds: "The five-group was very difficult to suggest and maintain. Most subjects declared their inability to get such a grouping." Two subjects found that "an extra click would attach itself to the group and pull it over to a six-group."³⁴ These practical experiments confirm the opinion, expressed at the beginning of this paragraph, that the decasyllable, by nature a-rhythmic and yet held to that measure by metrical scheme, must show signs of the struggle. The actual sign is the artificial tension mentioned before.

³³ Made by Miyake. Cf. *Researches on Rhythmic Action*. Studies in the Yale Psychological Laboratory, Vol. IV, 1896, pp. 108, 109.

³⁴ Bolton, p. 223.

Here, it is believed, lies the secret of the greater "informality" of the octosyllable and of the instinctive use of the decasyllable for more formal verse and for verse of the highest and most emotional type.³⁵ The artificial tension of the heroic line is what qualifies it for poetry in the dignified or the lofty strain. The mere matter of length has nothing to do with the selection. The English mind has no reverence for the fourteener, but at once breaks it up into an easy octosyllable and a tripping three-foot group; the English poet and the English reader find no sense of dignity or stateliness in the alexandrine, which at once gets away from any but the most skillful hands, and, like the longer septenar, tends to jog or to trot, even in the best verse. The heroic line, from its very artificiality, holds to the high key and produces unaided the grand style.

The effect of the artificial structure upon mind and ear is obvious. Its result is to key up the line to high tension and to hold it there in order to prevent break-down into prose-segments. The rhythm of the simple unit, the iambic foot, is emphasized in the effort to preserve the identity of that foot as opposed to a disorganizing caesural grouping. In consequence, the regular alternation of stress, the structural feature of the line, is made prominent, and at the same time the whole phrase is held up to the emotional monotone. It is, in short, a return to the simplest rhythmical progress as opposed to the secondary and more complex stage, that of grouping.³⁶

V. THE POET'S RESPONSE TO THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DEMAND OF THE DECASYLLABLE.

The poet, quick to feel the natural elevation of the line, makes it the vehicle of his subtler and loftier emotions; it becomes the recognized instrument of elevated and dignified

³⁵ Lewis, *English Verse*, p. 91 ff., dwells upon the distinction, but does not attempt to place it upon an adequate basis.

³⁶ Cf. C. R. Squire, *A Genetic Study of Rhythm*, p. 540. *American Journal of Psychology* XII, 1900-1901.

expression; the formal mood as opposed to the informal mood of the four-foot line.

The aesthetic demand of this line calls for a corresponding elevation and artificiality in word-rhythms. The every day intonations and accentuations of prose must be varied; now lifted up, now depressed, but in each case differentiated from common speech to conform to the soaring rhythm. Prose-stresses are good enough for the octosyllable; the heroic line makes higher demands. The poets, quick to feel this, have utilized every device to secure the demanded effect. Secondary accents are lifted up to dignity and importance; relational words, given delicate and subtle emphasis, take on fresh vigor and force; the charm of archaism, the suggestiveness of foreign stresses, are invoked to remove the heroic line as far as possible from the commonplace. All this in perhaps most often unconscious response to the aesthetic demands of the pentametric structure.

The phrase, "most often unconscious," is used advisedly. It is not likely that the poets deliberately choose to raise this tone or to lower that. The subtler force of aesthetic selection, the discriminating intelligence of the exalted mind singing its melody in the high key, the subconscious appreciative faculty, —these would appraise metrical values. Still, we do wrong to err in the opposite direction, and to conclude that it is all a matter of chance or, worse still, of absolute lack of rhythmical sense. Bentley's mutilation of Milton's lines ought to be a sufficiently horrible example to give pause to this orthodox criticism. That worthy has showed the world how easy it is to write lines that perfectly conform to prose stresses and at the same time lack the subtler elements of rhythm, and has, by so modifying the splendid periods of Milton, illustrated the ease of doing what Milton obviously did *not* intend to do. Dr. Nott has done the same for Wyatt. Other emenders, great names among them, too, have, by the simplest changes, made it plain how easily the poets could have made their lines run prose-fashion. It does not seem to have entered the heads of

these gentlemen that the poets may have had other ideas in mind.

VI. EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL CONTENT UPON STRUCTURE AND SCANSION.

It must now have become apparent that I claim for the five-foot line an influence similar to that of the emotional demand made by the finer and more elevated phases of content. It is, perhaps, unnecessary to recall the well-known fact that, as the thought approximates the state of exaltation, running the gamut of elevation from the impressive levels of the formal or grand style up to the supreme heights of intense emotion, the actual tone of the verse undergoes a corresponding change, the voice taking on more and more of the musical quality. The passage from the commonplace and diffuse is accompanied by a corresponding change in the character of the vocal sounds. Along with this change goes increased precision in observance of rhythm.³⁷ Here is an influence identical in its effects with that of the heroic line. When the two forces combine, as they do in most of the best English poetry, the result is a line of infinite aesthetic possibilities, none of which have been overlooked by the poets themselves. Their critics, however, have been reduced to inversions, to substitutions, to a score of weird devices, in order to make the line intelligible to themselves. The simple rhythms of the poet are obscured by a bewildering array of exceptions. Few lines seem to follow the scheme, and when, by chance, the iambic rhythm beats out five successive prose accents, the critics either shriek with delight or cry out against the "woodenness" of the line. Goodell says with reason: "Many fail to recognize the true character of rhythm in modern verse. The departures from the exact pattern"³⁸ are so great that they obscure this, unless one not

³⁷ Goodell (pp. 128, 129) gives an interesting statement of this fact, with special reference to classical poetry.

³⁸ The writer seems to have in mind here purely prose stresses.

merely has a rhythmic sense of at least average delicacy, but has in addition trained his consciousness of rhythm and acquired some skill in detecting the precise ratio of the regular rhythms. To any one so qualified—and most people can, if they care to, so qualify themselves—any verse that can be called good plainly reveals the exact pattern underneath, to which the movement tends to conform, and conforms more fully the more the reader, whether from the child's fondness for distinct rhythm or from the character of the poetry, approaches in his reading to the musical style."³⁹

VII. THE CHAUCERIANS AND THE DECASYLLABLE.

The Chaucerians found themselves the inheritors of a line that made extraordinary demands upon their metrical skill and yet adapted itself readily to the character of verse most in their taste. In an age of such pronounced artifice in verse, no line could have offered a more favorable medium of expression than the formal, artificial decasyllable. Statistics of the verse of the period show that it supplanted all other forms in the court poetry and largely ousted the octosyllable from the realm of serious verse.⁴⁰ To ascribe this popularity altogether to the influence of Chaucer, is to overlook the inherent character of the line itself, and to ignore the prevalence of similar conditions throughout the range of English poetry.

One goes too far, perhaps, in crediting Chaucer's disciples with such *finesse* of metrical feeling as to give them perfect grasp of the possibilities of their line or to supply them with sufficient aesthetic sense to utilize those possibilities in an artistic fashion. On the other hand, it can scarcely be denied that the sub-conscious influence of the line is everywhere apparent in Chaucerian

³⁹ Goodell, p. 183.

⁴⁰ The apparent exceptions of huge allegorical and didactic compositions translated from the French are due to the metre of the originals. To change that would have worked additional hardship to hack-writers already overburdened.

verse, and that the phenomena there displayed are identical with those of a more sophisticated age in metric, when every structural device is properly weighed and tested before it finds place. The essential difference here between Chaucerian and Victorian verse is precisely that which singles out the Chaucerians in other matters of metric. Excess and lack of discrimination, abuse rather than use,—these characterize the method of Lydgate, Oocleve, Ashby, Hawes, and the others of the school. In the matter of accentuation their method is the same as it is elsewhere. They felt the demands of their line; they were keenly sensitive to their notion of the tradition of poetry; they had a definite ideal of rhythm to reach; and all these conditions they tried to fulfil. The method they knew perfectly well; but they used it without skill and without reserve. In their hands it became an exaggeration; but the fact remains that they used a definite system and used it consciously.

It will be further urged, of course, as an argument against the choice and intelligent use of the heroic line, that the non-emotional character of the content of the poetry of the Chaucerian Tradition made no demand for exaltation in the line its medium. This is quite true; except in a few fine devotional passages, and a small body of verse of ascription or of an amorous character, there is little feeling deep enough to invoke the exalted strain. It must never be overlooked, however, that a conception of the line as a measured and formal phrase, to be read or intoned as such, would at once lift the verse from the conversational level, and start it on that upward way whose supreme height is exaltation. That the measured phrase or formal tone was the ideal of the period is one of the facts of metric. It will not escape the attention of the reader of medieval verse that when it loses its formal character the line usually descends to simple prose stresses, and even, as we shall see, to a complete change of structure. The long line is either replaced by the short, or drops into tumbling verse or the alliterating line of four stresses. *London Lyckpenny* and

Hawes's *Godfrey Gobelive* passages illustrate these two tendencies.

VIII. ORGANIC USE OF LINE AND STROPHE.

It is this discriminating use of the octosyllabic and the decasyllabic lines, and of the freer tumbling or alliterating forms of the long line, that constitutes one of the strongest arguments in favor of nicety of metrical perception among the Chaucerians. It may be objected that one goes too far in crediting them with so much delicacy of rhythmical apprehension and such keenness of feeling for the fitness of things; but to dub them all dull dogs without an ear for rhythm and with not enough sense of form to apprehend the innate organic character of the several lines at their disposal, is to discredit the evidence of the poetry itself. It is certain that even in that time, when the poetic flame burned low, the versifiers yet felt the inherent quality of dignity in the long line, especially in its formal grouping in the Chaucerian stanza, and that they recognized, with equal intelligence, the informal character of the octosyllable. Their use of the two lines and their differentiation even between the decasyllable in the stanza and the same line in the less formal couplet, are not to be lightly considered.

The recognition of the heroic line as the proper vehicle for grave and dignified expression, as opposed to the shorter and less imposing octosyllable, is very early apparent. Gower felt the difference, and in the *Confessio Amantis*, when he wanted to secure a more elevated tone for the *Supplication* (Book VIII, 2217 ff.),⁴¹ he left his octosyllables for the heroic line and the couplet for Rime Royal. The *Hymn in Praise of Peace*⁴² is in the same high key. The careful reader will note that the poet, in both cases, changes the metre in order to secure a different effect of tone, and that the grand style thus striven for and attained depends not merely upon the greater length

⁴¹ EETS. Ext. Ser. 82, 446 ff.

⁴² EETS. Ext. Ser. 82, 481 ff.

of the line, but upon a more frequent use of secondary accents and of pitch-accent upon words usually of low value in prose. Schipper noticed this difference in accentuation, but, as usual, thought it perhaps due to the greater unfamiliarity of the stanza and verse. "Solche absolute Glätte," says he, "wie er sie seinen kurzen Reimpaaren zu geben verstand, hat er indess in diesen fünftaktigen Rhythmen nicht angestrebt oder wenn er sie beabsichtigt hat, jedenfalls nicht erreicht, vermutlich weil ihm diese neue und complicierte Vers und strophenform doch grössere Schwierigkeiten bereitete als jenes Versmass."⁴³ The easy conclusion of unfamiliarity with a new rhythm is so easy as to be suspicious. The addition of a single foot could not possibly have confused the ear of a man who could and did reel off tens of thousands of lines in octosyllable with almost modern regularity of accent. Schipper's own examples⁴⁴ of the "licenses" show that Gower was holding up his heroic line by the very devices classified as irregularities. Note the floating effect secured in these lines by pitch-accent upon relational words, emphasis of the secondary stresses, and suppression in thesis of the usual heavy accents of prose:

He ches *wisdóm* untó the governy^xngé.

In Praise of Peace, 32.

O kyng fulfilled of grace and óf knygh^xthóde.

Ibid. 155.

Such was the wille that time of thé God^xhéde.

Ibid. 172.

Similar lines are scattered throughout the poem; in fact there is scarcely a stanza that does not show a group of excellent examples.

Undoubtedly, we have in Gower one of the earliest and clearest indications of that instinctive choice of the heroic line

⁴³ *Metrik* I, 484.

⁴⁴ *Metrik* I, 485 ff.

of the elevated type as the medium of grave and dignified expression; of the differentiating of that line from the more informal octosyllable, not merely on account of the accident of length, but by the employment of the subtler means of variation, —secondary stress, pitch-accent, and the emphasis of words of relation.

There is abundant evidence that Chaucer's disciples recognized and applied the principle. Lydgate's colossal translation of the *Pilgrimage of Man* moves along with octosyllabic jog smoothly enough, even for modern ears. The poet, however, finds it more fitting to put his dignified and moral *Prologue* into 184 lines of decasyllabic verse. Such lines as these below illustrate the formal tone he had in mind and the means he employed to secure it:

And thyng ywonne wyth Joye *and* glād^xnésse

Ay dýs^xseveréth wyth wo and hevynésse

No tresour here wyth Ó man wýl abyde.

ll. 15-17.

The *Temple of Glas* offers another excellent example. The entire narrative portion is written in decasyllabic couplet, with little to confuse modern ears; but the "litel bil" presented by the Lady to Venus consists of twenty-six stanzas in Rime Royal, with marked elevation of tone secured, in a measure, by the methods spoken of before. After this interruption the narrative begins again in couplet, to be broken again after line 700 by the knight's Complaint to Venus in the statelier Rime Royal. This is the immediate predecessor of a series of speeches by the Lady and by Venus, closing with a glorification of Venus by the two lovers that strikingly suggests the elevated strain of contemporary devotional poetry. The opening lines display clearly the fact that the elevation is not merely that of content:

Fairést of sterres that *with* youre persant light
And *with* the cherisshíng of yóure stremes clere

Causén in lové hertès tó been light
 Oonlí thurgh shynyng óf youre gládè spere.

l. 1341 ff.

In the *Assembly of the Gods* a striking case of the variation occurs. With stanza 97 begins a list of the followers of Idleness; and the whole tone of the verse changes at once. Rime Royal is preserved, but the lines seem unquestionably four-stress, and not even the loosest decasyllable. It is true that none of the lines in the poem are remarkable for regularity,⁴⁵ but the stanzas from 90 to 102 inclusive, all devoted to the army of Idleness, are marked by a distinct going over into genuine four-stress verse, accompanied by the other characteristics of the old native line,—alliteration, uncertain syllabification, and the fixed medial caesura. The stanzas devoted to the followers of Virtue (129-132) show these marks less frequently. The heaviness of the line is continued throughout the battle scene that follows the lists of the two opposing hosts. All the stanzas devoted to the fight and its attendant circumstances are in lumbering Rime Royal, strikingly like the crude stanzas of the contemporary drama. At stanza 212, where the scene is suddenly shifted from the battle-field to the *School of Doctrine*, the verse becomes noticeably smoother, loses its four-stress movement, and is plainly intended for regular pentameter. There is no haphazard change of form here, but an evident variation to conform to the difference in content. It is clear that the author of the *Assembly*, whether Lydgate or another, had a definite notion of the dignity of the heroic line and of its organic use.

Lydgate shows similar discrimination elsewhere. He felt that the stately line of his *Complaint of the Black Knight* and of his devotional poetry was not suited to the theme of the *London Lyckpenny*, and in the latter poem he used the appro-

⁴⁵ On this ground Seiper questions the Lydgatean authorship. (See EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 2.) But there is evidence on the other side. (Cf. Triggs, p. xi.)

priate tumbling verse of the light variety, whose dancing measure is so well adapted to the content. Further than this, he knew also how to use the heavy long line derived from the ancient native verse; the pseudo-alliterating line, with its inorganic alliteration, its end-rime, and its stanza grouping. Lydgate's notable use of this line is in *The Tale of The Lady Prioresse and her Three Suitors*.⁴⁶ For this humorous story the poet wisely chose the informal heavy tumbling verse. A single stanza will show his use of it:

O gloryus God oure governor gladin alle this gesttyng
 And gyfe them joye that wylle here whatt I shalle saye or syng.
 Me were lothe to be under non of them that byn not connyng;
 Many maner of men there be that wylle meddylle of every thyng,
 Of resons x or xii.
 Dyverse mene fawttes wylle fele,
 That knowethe no more then doythe my hele,
 That they thynke nothyng ys welle,
 But yt do meve of themselfe.

Evidence, then, seems to indicate that Lydgate knew and used genuine tumbling verse of both the light and the heavy kinds, and that he used this rough verse, as he used the formal decasyllable, with keen appreciation of the essential difference between the two varieties, and with every indication of organic purpose.

Hawes shows the same intelligence in the *Pastime of Pleasure*. Stanza after stanza of formal verse rolls along in the Chaucerian style, with superabundance of aureate diction to give weight and dignity, and with all the archaism and artificiality of an obsolete system of prosody. Suddenly, at Chapter xxix, Godfrey Gobilyve appears upon the scene, the content becomes humorous, and the whole character of the

⁴⁶ Cf. *Lydgate's Minor Poems*, Percy Society, Vol. II, 1840, p. 107 ff. for the text. The authorship of *Lyckpenny* has been questioned (cf. *Anglia* xx, 404 ff.) but the question seems to me to be still an open one.

verse changes. The dignified stanza dissolves into the riding rime or couplet of the *Canterbury Tales*, a marked tendency towards alliteration and the fixed medial caesura suggests the ancient native verse, and the line, without losing decasyllabic form, becomes organically weaker, and lends itself more readily to a forced four-stressed scansion. The Gobilyve passage is succeeded by a *Supplication* to Venus (Chapter xxx) which, of course, brings back the formal stanza and the stricter line. A succession of stanzas on dignified themes and in the high key is followed by the simultaneous re-appearance (Chapter xxxii) of Godfrey and riding rime. Both disappear with the advent of Chapter xxxiii, and neither interrupt the stately procession of Chaucerian stanzas that follow in endless succession to the close of the poem.

One point of the greatest importance must be noted here: Hawes does not change the machinery of his verse for the sake of mere variety or to indicate more effectually the individuality of an organic member in the structure of the poem. He does change it to accord with the inherent difference in content. Notice that the couplet accompanies Godfrey as long as he is present in the action and not only while he has a speaking part. He does not speak continuously in either of the two couplet sections, but the movement persists throughout the Godfrey incident, even in the dialogue in which he, though present, takes no part. With his capture in the second couplet section, the easy movement does not cease, but continues until the incident is closed, when the stanza begins anew. The same method is pursued with the stanza itself. For example, Chapter xxxi is in the grand style, being a *Letter* from Venus to La Belle Pucelle. It follows a long section in Rime Royal, La Graunde Amoure's *Supplication*, also elevated in theme and style. Now, if Hawes were changing his scheme merely for the sake of variety, we should look for a difference when the *Letter* begins. On the contrary, he retains the same metrical form because it is that best suited to the purpose. In short, he is seeking organic adaptation and not mere variety.

More marked than the difference between the roll of the stanza and the jog of the couplets is that between the rhythms of the two lines themselves. After the difficult pentameters of the couplet, perhaps intended for four-stress verses, the measured beat of the decasyllables in the stanza is doubly noticeable. The most careless reader must feel the great change in the organic character of the verse.

Examples might be multiplied, but those given are sufficient to illustrate the truth of the claim that the Chaucerians never lost sight of the inherent dignity of the Chaucerian stanza, and that they felt with equal keenness the essential differences between the informal beat of the octosyllable, the primitive and suggestive rhythm of the alliterating, four-stress verse, the formal movement of the simple decasyllable, and the soar of that line when artfully lifted up to heights of dignity and stateliness.

The contemporary drama shows the same artistic use of varied metric to indicate changing moods of the play. Dr. Ramsay has developed this feature interestingly. (Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 98, p. cxxxiv ff.)

IX. METHOD OF THE GRAND STYLE DURING THE TRADITION.

When attention is directed toward the structure of the individual line rather than toward the organic use of line-types, the study of the decasyllable is fruitful in results. Its most noteworthy structural feature during the period of the Tradition is the frequent and often exaggerated use of the devices for securing the grand style, the style that was undoubtedly the metrical ideal of the period.

As I have suggested before, it is, perhaps, going too far to ascribe this striving for elevation to a corresponding exaltation in the minds of the poets. The content of the verse militates against the idea. It is impossible, for example, to conceive of the exalted state of mind in Hawes, when he so

fully and so drearily defines "a noun substantive in hys degre" in pompous Rime Royal. Not exaltation, indeed, but a sense of the fitness of things must be allowed these versifiers. Verse was not then, as it is now, the ready medium of any man for any purpose. It was, and above all the court poetry was, a serious and formal exercise, not to be lightly undertaken. The dramatic poetry of the period shows what verse became when released from the fetters of this tradition. Skelton escaped it altogether in much of his work, but he had to resort to fantastic uses to accomplish his purpose, and the fact that he had no successors is additional proof of the tenacity of the canon of formality and pompousness. Yet the devotional poetry of the entire period approximates exaltation, and unquestionably lines in that manner depend much upon the means so repeatedly emphasized in this chapter to secure the high strain that sung itself in the mind under the influence of the devotional mood. Chaucer's work in religious vein illustrates this fact; Lydgate's occasional outbursts of praise or supplication show the action of the mechanism; Occleve's lines furnish unusually good examples because he exaggerated the method.

In spite of this exaggeration, Occleve shows a decided talent for holding up his line by the use of the several devices mentioned. Always tending toward pitch-accent,⁴⁷ his lines in the elevated strain are remarkable for the uplift secured by the mechanism itself. From a wealth of examples let these suffice:

The chápitre óf a chírche Cáthedrál.

Regement 2906.

In this line the artificiality of the Romance stresses serves to give the line a somewhat formal effect.

Of thé myghtý Prince óf famoús honoúr.

Balade to Lord of York 3.

Honoúr long lyfe ^xjoie and ^xcristés blyssýng ^x

⁴⁷ Courthope I, 339, finds 10 per cent. of such lines.

Mot have oure sustenoúr our prince & kyng.

Regement 2855, 2856.

The two examples are excellent illustrations of the method. In the first line each of the five stresses falls on a syllable weak in prose. Of these five, two, *the* and *of*, are elevated by pitch-accent, and the relational idea is thus emphasized rather than suppressed; one stress falls on an historic Anglo-Saxon suffix, the *y* in *mighty*; two utilize the Romance stresses in *famoús* and *honour*. Only one syllable in the entire line gets ordinary prose value; *of* in the initial thesis enjoys that distinction. Read in the prose fashion approved of by the usual modern canons of scansion, the line tumbles into metrical chaos; yet its place in the formal *ballade* stanza indicates that its intention is most dignified.

The second example illustrates the same method of elevation. In the first line the stresses on *-our*, *and*, *-es*, and *yng* are the sustaining and differentiating notes; in the second line the word *sústenoúr* keeps up the tone. All these stresses can, of course, be justified on historical grounds. (Cf. Bright and Miller's *English Versification*, Ginn & Co., Boston, 1910, §§ 41-47.)

One more selection will show the lofty style maintained by the same method throughout a succession of lines.

To yow welle óf honúr and worthynesse
Our right cristén kyng heir & Súccessóur
Unto Justinians dévout tendrenesse
In thé feith óf Jhesú our Rédemptóur.

EETS. Ext. Ser. 61, p. 41.

Modern ears will find difficult steering here between the Scylla of tumbling verse and the Charybdis of syllable-counting. Lydgate has been denounced as the archetype of the one and Occleve as the horrible example of the other. The only safe course and the only true one seems to me to be the rhythm-doctrine, based upon the sense of elevation that must come to the poet of the serious or the formal, and obtained by methods whose object is to differentiate the rhythmic line from the undisciplined tumble of prose.

X. METHOD OF THE GRAND STYLE AND OF THE EMOTIONAL
STYLE IN MODERN VERSE.

Incredible though it seem, the method of Occleve may be the method of Shakespeare, of Milton, of Pope, of Tennyson, of Shelley, Keats, Phillips, and a host of others. If, under the tradition of a lofty and nobly monotonous scansion, the lines of the Chaucerians exhibit the phenomena of secondary accent, suppression of prose-stresses, and elevation of words of relation, as definite means of maintaining the grand style, similar features ought, according to our theory, to appear in modern verse wherein the emotional demand brings up the line to a similar level of tenseness. In both cases the tonal result would be the same, although proceeding from slightly different causes; the natural tendency of the line would be assisted by tradition in one case; the psychology of the verse would, unaided and unfettered by academic canons, produce the same result in the other. Investigation shows that the theory holds.

Milton's work in the grand style represents the method perhaps at its best. The following examples of his elevation of words of relation, and of syllables usually weak in prose are of unusual interest. They are all taken from *Paradise Lost*:

How all his malice serv'd but *tó* bring forth.

I 217.

Deep malice *tó* conceal, couch't *with* revenge.

IV 123.

Stood whispering soft by *á* fresh fountain side.

IV 326.

O Hell! What *dó* mine eyes with grief behold?

IV 358.

As a despite done against the Most High.

VI 906.

Yet fell; remember *ánd* fear *tó* transgress.

VI 912.

And dust shalt eat all *thé* days *óf* thy life.

X 178.

To judge them *with* his saints; him *thé* Most High.
 XI 705.

For gods! Yet him God *thé* Most High vouchsafes.
 XII 120.

Shall long usurp; ere *thé* third dawning light.
 XII 421.

Milton manipulates the secondary accents of Latin polysyllables with telling effect. In this respect he is related to those Chaucerians who found in aureate diction a medium useful for their purpose. The artistic possibilities of words in *able* seem to have appealed to a number of modern poets, notably Milton, Pope, and Shelley. Milton writes, in *Paradise Lost*:

Of depth immesuráble. Anon they move.
 I 549.

Abomináble, inutteráble, and worse.
 II 626.

Impenetráble, impaled with circling fire.
 II 647.

Innumeráble as the stars of night.
 V 745.

They viewed the vast immesuráble abyss.
 VII 211.

Abomináble, accurst, the house of woe.
 X 465.

A final and striking example is the line,
 O miseráble^x mánkínd^x, tó what fall.
 XI 500.

Shelley had the same idea of holding up the line when he wrote,

But kissed it *ánd* then fled as thou mightést in dream.
The Question, I 8.

Tennyson, Arnold, and Keats knew how to get the same soaring effect; witness these lines:

There *is* sweet music here that softer falls
 Than petals *fróm* blown roses *ón* the grass
 Or night-dews *ón* still waters *bétween* walls.

The Lotos-Eaters, 46-48.

The sweetest *hárp-playér* in Catana.

Empedocles on Aetna, 12.

To bend with apples *thé* moss'd cottage-trees.

Ode to Autumn, 5.

Goodell, who cites these examples,⁴⁸ says very pertinently: "Of course it is possible to say that these are bad lines. To that one can only reply: Is it likely that the objector is a better judge in a matter of verse-technique than poets who were so well-trained and so successful in the practice of the art as these quoted? At any rate *they* deemed such combinations of ietus and accent legitimate and the examples illustrate my point."⁴⁹

The writer might well have added that the phenomena which attracted his attention may be duplicated in thousands of lines of modern English verse from the pens of these and other poets of the first rank.⁵⁰ In fact he might have said with equal truth that it is just in poetry of the most consciously artistic type that the phenomena make their appearance most frequently.

Goodell classifies his lines as examples of "slightly stressed word-accents in arsis in a certain degree of conflict with the regular ietus. A better phrase would be alongside of but not interfering with the ietus."⁵¹ The phrase "alongside of but not interfering" is vague and misleading. How can a "slightly stressed word-accent in arsis" exist *alongside of* the ietus and at the same time not interfere with it? Where does

⁴⁸ As good ones and better can be found anywhere; only lack of space prevents my giving more of them. Cf. Bright and Miller, *op. cit.*, §§ 41-47.

⁴⁹ Goodell, 164, note.

⁵⁰ See the studies by Bright, Brown, Miller, and Melton. All give examples of the use of secondary accent in modern English verse.

⁵¹ Goodell, 163.

the ictus fall? Upon what? Does this doctrine not destroy the value of the ictus altogether by allowing another element to exist in a position that belongs to ictus alone?

A more recent writer on the subject finds the same difficulty in locating his metrical mile-posts. Of such lines as,

Then tore with bloody talon *thé* rent plain,
Disasters *in* the sun and *thé* moist star,

he explains that he uses "hovering accent," but, he adds naïvely, "I cannot say exactly where. I let the imaginary beat fall somewhere between *the* and *rent*, but I am not sure that either word comes exactly at stress-time."⁵² The same writer thinks that whether such words are accented at all "makes little difference in the rhythm of the line. . . . The stress is theoretically present; and it is actually present in that subliminal consciousness in which we carry our ideal scheme."⁵³

The situation in the cases of Goodell and Lewis is suggestive of the dilemma, and the statements of both investigators indicate a regrettable state of uncertainty in accounting for a phenomenon whose existence neither can deny. Both fail to see that the ictus falls squarely and unmistakably upon the syllable that coincides with its normal recurrence; that the element of pitch, or pitch-accent, brings up the weak syllable to the level of the line; and that this very emphasis imposed by pitch-accent marks the ictus with a stress as distinct as the other stresses in the line, but differing from them in quality.⁵⁴ This is "no element of violent stress that runs athwart natural word-accents. Slight variations in intensity are sufficient to interpret the rhythmic feeling of the mind and to make it intelligible to another."⁵⁵ But the element of stress, no matter how indicated, is there, and must be there to preserve the

⁵² Lewis, 37. Cf. Mayor, *Transactions of the Philological Society*, London, 1873-1874, p. 637.

⁵³ Lewis, 24.

⁵⁴ Cf. Meumann, Wundt's *Philosophische Studien* x, 402, 403.

⁵⁵ Hendrickson, *AJPh.* xx, 204.

rhythm. To quote Hendrickson again, and substituting *accent* for *quantity*, "Even though it were possible to preserve a correct feeling for a rhythm which the accent does not reveal, this consciousness (Lewis's "subliminal consciousness") is incapable of interpreting the correct rhythmic feeling to another."⁵⁶ There must be something more than the "imaginary beat" of whose whereabouts Lewis is not quite sure.

No student of English metric seems to have been impressed with the fact that the greater number of such examples of (to them) uncertain accents and hovering stresses are found in poetry of grave and serious intention and distinctly elevated tone, in impassioned verse in the emotional strain, or in highly-wrought and designedly aesthetic lines. Yet this fact, of the very greatest importance in support of our theory, may be confirmed by a comparatively small amount of reading, and its truth can then scarcely be denied. It is notably true of Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne, and others of that school, whose pre-Raphaelite sensibilities naturally led them to the delicate artificiality, the conscious striving after subtle verbal effects, that are so patent in the sensuously beautiful and appealing verse of that aesthetic tradition. It is also true of the great poetry which preceded that group, but perhaps not so noticeably true. It is true without question of some of the most modern verse in the English language, for example the poetry of Phillips and that of Moody. Illustrations have been given from Milton; it remains to point out the method in later verse. I add a few examples.

The following passage from Shelley's *Alastor* (ll. 18-29) illustrates the poet's mood as expressed in the mechanism itself of the verse. Elevation and sustained flight, poise and soar, are the qualities of metric that consist with the exalted strain of the content. These the poet has secured by very definite means. In every line some prose-obscure word is raised to the level of the verse-flight by placing it in arsis and thus under

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 431.

ictus. Free use of pitch-accent upon secondary stresses and the articulative elements of the phraseology gives to the lines striking artificiality, and secures for them those qualities of tenseness and flight, of dignity and elevation, that are precisely in harmony with the emotional strain, and that transport the verses as far as possible from the unsuggestive and informal movement of prose. To explain away this soaring quality by the use of the trite devices of inversion, and other non-rhythmical substitutions, is to level the temple dome to the uninspiring plains of mere prose. When it is recalled that the passage cited is only one of hundreds illustrating the same method, the truth of the theory becomes obvious.

Mothér of this unfathomáble world!
 Favóúr my solemn song, for Í have loved
 Thee ever ánd thee only; Í have watched
 Thy shadow, ánd the darkness óf thy steps,
 And mý heart ever gazes ón the depth
 Of thý deep mysteries. Í have made my bed
 In charnels ánd on coffins, whére black death
 Keeps record óf the trophies won from thee,
 Hopiíng to still these obstinate questioníngs
 Of thee and thine, by forcing sóme lone ghost
 Thy messenger, to render úp the tale
 Of what we are.

The *Ulysses* of Stephen Phillips⁵⁷ affords many examples of the same method. Of the elevation of relational words by pitch-accent, there is a host of illustrations, each showing the idea in the poet's mind, the idea of an impressive and sustained monotone suited to the content. Such lines are these:

Evér the snare was set, evér in vain.

p. 13.

⁵⁷ Stephen Phillips, *Ulysses*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1902. Reference is made by page to this edition, in which the lines are not numbered.

Come, come, Ulysses! burn back *thróugh* the world.
p. 49.

And all ye nymphs sing *tó* me while I spin.
p. 52.

Up *fróm* the white whirl *óf* Charybdis pool.
p. 69.

And Beauty *with* blood dripping *fróm* her lips.
p. 81.

A windy land that stands out *óf* the sea
Gull-haunted, *ánd* men call it Ithaca.
p. 93.

For her that weepeth *bý* the rolling sea.
p. 95.

What peril? Up, Ulysses, *fróm* the ground!
p. 120.

First *únto* Zeus and *tó* Athene praise!
p. 172.

In each case cited the mechanism shows the poet's state of mind, keyed up to the apprehension of the subtle values of those minor structural features lost sight of in the utilitarian haste of prose.

Sometimes the movement is floated by attaching stress to the article. In a few cases the article is used without an attendant adjective, as in the line,

For brutish force? what play hath *thé* mind here.
p. 168.

but this use is exceptional. In most cases the order is article + adjective + noun. The method is at once apparent. The object is to hold up the line. The article is elevated by pitch-accent induced by the ictus; the adjective retains most of the stress that belongs to it in prose, but is slightly suppressed in thesis; the substantive falls under ictus and gets full value. The result is a levelling of stress, and the line floats in response to the demand made by the content. Such lines are these:

Thou knowest *thé* ^x*long yéars* I have not quailed.
p. 48.

I tell you out of *á* ^x*sad héart* the truth.
p. 58.

The creeping up of *thé* ^x*slow féarful* ^x*foám*.
p. 79.

The first night, *thé* ^x*sweet níght* of my return.
p. 102.

And O! what land? So thick is *thé* ^x*sea-míst*.
p. 114.

The poet's emphasis of secondary accents is no less successful in securing elevation. A few good examples are:

Évér the snare was set, *évér* in vain.
p. 13.

Upwárd, évér, the stone which still rebounds.
p. 100.

The union of sound and sense secured by my reading of this line and of the line *Pacing, pacing, etc.*, will not escape notice; give the first two words prose-stress and the effect is gone.

False, false, *aftér* such sea, *aftér* such storm.
p. 103.

Pacíng, pacíng away the aching night.
p. 159.

Good examples of the method of elevation are the following passages in which the several varieties of stress are combined:

Thy music floated up *intó* my room,
And *thé* sweet words of it have hurt my heart.
p. 42.

Undér the stars, in *thé* ^x*white ténts*, at Troy.

p. 101.

Névér so sweet was Clytemnestra's kiss
As *ón* that night, her voice, *nevér* so soft.

p. 102.

What brought the *tó* thy death? Waiting for thee
Waitíng and weeping *ánd* long wonderíng.

p. 105.

In the following passage the rhetorical emphasis belonging to *too* assists in holding up the tone in the first line:

Prometheus, *ón this breast* ^x*too* anguish feeds,
And *ón* this heart swoops *dówn* the eating fear.

p. 103.

Again I would emphasize the fact that in *Ulysses*, as in other poetry, the majority of the lines that show the method occur in passages where the dramatic tension is strong and the tone sustained. The impassioned speeches of the hero almost invariably make use of this system of elevation. A notable example is the wild outburst in the presence of Calypso, when the vision of "gaunt Ithaca" rises before the hero. The very mechanism of the line seems to respond to the emotional demand, and each verse soars straight to the end with a frequent final upward flight that is significant. The outward and visible signs are the groups of pitch-accents towards the end of each line. The italicized words indicate this:

Then have the truth; I speak as *á* man speaks;
Pour *óút* my heart like treasure *át* your feet.
This odorous amorous isle of violets,
That leans all leaves *intó* the glassy deep,
With brooding music *óver* noontide moss,
And *lów* dirge *óf* the lily-swinging bee,—
Then stars like opening eyes on closing flowers,—
Palls *ón* my heart. Ah, God! that *Í* might see
Gaunt Ithaca stand *úp* ^x*out óf* the surge,

You lashed and streaming rocks, and sobbing crags,

The screaming gull and *thé* ^x*wild-flying* cloud:—

To see far off the smoke of *mý* ^x*own* hearth,

To smell far out the glebe of *mý* ^x*own* farms,

To spring alive upon her precipices,

And hurl the singing spear *intó* the air;

To scoop the mountain torrent *ín* my hand,

And plunge *intó* the midnight *óf* her pines;

To look *intó* the eyes of her who bore me,

And clasp his knees who 'gat me *ín* his joy,

Prove *if* my son be *like* my dream of him.

.

Now am I mad for silence *ánd* for tears,

.

I *ám* an-hungered *fór* that human breast,

That bosom *á* sweet *hive* of memories—

.

Remember, Goddess, *thé* *great while* it is.

pp. 65, 66, 67.

There is something significant, too, I am convinced, in the noticeable preference for the close rather than the beginning of the verse as the place for the sustained tone. There, perhaps, the highstrung decasyllable reaches its greatest tension; there the subtle strain of the instrument is met by the poet with tense rhythmic effort.

After all due allowance is made for the tremendous difference in aesthetic perception between the poets of the fifteenth and those of the nineteenth centuries, for the totally different conditions that form the environment of the verse, for the impossibility of setting up a common standard of comparison, it still remains an unmistakable fact that, given certain common conditions, the metrical phenomena of the Chaucerian Tradition and of the present day display a close similarity and indicate a common response to approximately identical demands.

Knowing, as we do, what those demands are for our own day, and how they are met, we may feel ourselves justified in ascribing similar features of the verse of the Tradition to similar demands upon the poets of that period, met by them in similar fashion.

XI. MINOR CONFIRMATIONS OF THE THEORY OF THE GRAND STYLE.

The theory of the grand style is strengthened by certain minor circumstances that seem to indicate the effort to produce an effect of dignity and solemnity.

Chief among these is the use of aureate diction; it offers a striking bit of evidence. This feature has often been ascribed to the effort at artificial adornment as substitute for the finer poetic qualities; but when it is recalled that even those who really had something to say, notably the Scottish Chaucerians, did not hesitate to use the device, the idea of mere adornment must be rejected. Undoubtedly, the stately roll of the polysyllable commended itself highly to the taste of men whose idea of the heroic line was that it should move with a majestic tread, and who used every means to secure that movement.

To think of this method as a license confined to the Tradition is to make a grave mistake. The imposing march of Milton's blank verse owes not a little of its power to the artistic use of a diction thoroughly classic and largely polysyllabic. Much of the actual effect of this verse depends upon the stateliness of the words themselves. Since Milton's use of the feature has been touched upon earlier in the chapter, it is unnecessary to give examples here. A useful illustration, however, is forthcoming in the verse of Pope. This poet realized the metrical value of the pompous polysyllable, and one line in particular, repeated with slight variations several times, shows how he used it. The poem is the *Iliad*.

The train *majestically* slow proceeds.

And forth she pac'd *majesticálly* sad.

xxiv, 124.

The sage and King *majesticálly* slow.

xxiv, 869.

Words in *able* are favorites with Pope, to whom the noticeable secondary accent seems to have strongly appealed. Examples from the *Iliad* are: *veneráble*, i, 337; *honoráble*, i, 354; *hospitáble*, vi, 16; *uncomfortáble*, vi, 248; *miseráble*, vi, 446; *unutteráble*, xxii, 73; *penetráble*, xxii, 404; *formidáble*, xxii, 505; etc.

It is hardly necessary to mention this method in Tennyson, Shelley, and other moderns.

In this, as in everything else of value in metric, the Chaucerians separate themselves from their successors not by their use so much as by their abuse of a wholly legitimate metrical instrument. Here, as elsewhere, lavish excess is the result of the very means which in other hands makes for real beauty. There is a great gulf fixed between the splendid adornment of *Paradise Lost* and the meretricious ornament of the *Pastime of Pleasure*.

Even the discredited alliteration was sometimes resorted to for adding to this sort of dignity. A good example of this method is Occleve's *Aungelys Song*,⁵⁸ written in the lofty strain. Contrary to his ordinary usage, the first stanza begins,

Al worshippe wisdam welthe and worthinesse
All bounte beawte joye and blisfulheed.

The alliteration here can have been added for no other purpose than to give dignity to the line; in this effort it suggests contemporary dramatic poetry of the ruder sort, with its bombastic regal harangues. The feeble efforts of Occleve and the earlier Chaucerians on English soil are completely outdone by the Scottish poets; they depended much upon this poor device, and in their hands it became all but ridiculous. Not satisfied

⁵⁸ EETS. Ext. Ser. 72, xxxiv.

with resounding polysyllables and the alliteration of initial syllables, they added sectional rhyme, and then carried the resultant aureate style to the utmost degree of mannerism. It is significant that the most notable examples of this apotheosis of aureate diction are works of the utmost gravity and even of devotion. No English Chaucerian has approached the exaggerated style of Dunbar's enthusiastic hymn addressed to the Holy Virgin, *Ane Ballat of Our Lady*; yet, in spite of its excess of ornament, the poem does possess a certain loftiness, the very quality that the poet had in mind while putting on the "golden" decoration. The devotional poetry of Walter Kennedy, and the high strain of Alexander Scott's *Ane new yeir gift to the quene Mary, Quhen scho come first hame*⁵⁹ are additional examples of the excesses brought about by this striving after verbal pomp and splendor.

A second phenomenon confirming the theory of grave elevation of tone and excess of formality in the court poetry, is the character of the prose in later though similar periods in the history of the literature. It is manifestly unfair to choose illustrations from the prose of the time of the Tradition itself, for prose was then still in a comparatively early state of development. But the poetic ideal was still so eminently grave and formal in the sixteenth century, when prose came to its own, and in later periods, when prose had fully developed, that we may safely draw conclusions from conditions existing after the strict limits of the Tradition represented by Sir Thomas Wyatt.

The orthodox reference of the sentence-structure of these times to the influence of Latin models is no doubt correct enough, but it is obvious that, apart from such merely syntactical influence, the frequency of stately prose periods in the serious and formal strain is indicative of the taste and general literary method of the time.

Sir Thomas Wyatt, whose verse, especially in sonnets and

⁵⁹ EETS. Ext. Ser. 85, p. 3.

psalm, conforms fully to the canon of the grand style of scan-sion, writes prose sentences of the same lofty character, grave in matter and periodic in structure. One will suffice as illustration; it is taken from a letter to his son:

"And of my self y may be a nere example unto yow of my foly and unthriftines yt hath as y wel deservid broght me in a M. dangers & hazardes enmyties, hatredes, prisonmentes despites and indignationes: but yt god hath of his goodnes, chas-tized me & not cast me cleane out of his favour, which thing y can impute to no thing but to ye goodnes of my good fathir, yt y dare wel say purchasid wt continual request of god grase towards me more then y regarded or considered my self, and a litel part to ye smal fear yt y had of god in ye most of my rage & ye litel delite yt y had in mischeffe."⁶⁰

This sentence has 122 words, and, although the sentence is not strictly periodic, somewhat of the tension is instinctively maintained from the first word to the last. It is one of many in the same strain and of similar structure.

Another striking example, of slightly later date, is the introduction *To the Reader* in John Wayland's print of Hawes's *Pastime of Pleasure*. This remarkable sentence illustrates the ideal of 1554. It runs as follows:

"Sithe that all menne for the most part by a naturall inclination desire rather to spend their dayes in pleasure and delectable pastimes then in painful studyes and tedious labours. And yet nevertheles by the secrete inspiracion of Almighty God (all men in general) so insaciately thirsteth for the knowl-edge of wisdom and learnyng, that some for very earnest desire therof (thoughe nature grudgeth) cease not to spend their dayes and houres with suche continuall and importunate travayle in sekyng the same, that havyng no regarde to the over pressing of Nature in searchyng with all diligence for the true vaine of knowledge, do sodainely bryng forth their owne confusion. Some contrariwise (whom nature to muche ruleth)

⁶⁰ Cf. *Anglia* XIX, p. 415, l. 62 ff.

beyng discomforted wyth painefull and tedious study, rather chose to be drowned in the stinkyng floude of ignorance, then wyth so muche sweate and paynes, to sayle (wyth a by wynde) into the plesaunt Ilande of wisdom and science, which thing considered (most gentle reader) I offer here unto the for thy better instruction this little volume, conteynyng and treatyng upon the seven liberal sciences, and the whole course of man's life, firste compiled and devised by Stephen Hawes gentleman, grome of the chamber to the famous Prynce and seconde Saloman, Kynge Henry the seventh. A man (as by his worckes appeareth) of a pleasaunte wytte, and singuler learnyng, wherein thou shalt finde at one tyme, wisdom and learnyng, with myrthe and solace. So that herein thou mayest easely fynde (as it were in pastyme) wythout offence of nature that thyng, and in short space, whiche many great clarkes wythout great paynes and travayle and long continuance of time heretofore coude never obteyne nor get, which as it was firste entituled by the Aucthoure, to be the Pastime of Pleasure, and under the same title so dedicated to the sayed worthy Prynce, by the Aucthoure therof: so shalt thou good reader wyth deliberate readyng therof, fynde it not onely the Pastyme of Pleasure, but also of profite. Farewel." ⁶¹

I have retained the punctuation of the original, but the reader will notice at once that there is little connection between that punctuation and the flow of the thought and its expression. In fact, this group of over three hundreds words is really one prodigious semi-periodic sentence, during the reading of which the thought is held in suspense till the very end. If it be read aloud, the periodic tension makes itself evident in the sustained tone that is essential to the correct interpretation of the thought. The first break of the slightest sort, for example, does not occur until we reach the phrase, "which thing considered," after which the tension is resumed until the close.

⁶¹ Reprinted in Robert Southey's *Select Works of the British Poets from Chaucer to Jonson*, p. 77, London. Undated, but Preface dated March 26, 1831.

The finest flower of this spirit of dignity and formality is the liturgical prose of the middle of the sixteenth century, when the first prayer-books in English made their appearance.⁶² In these books of devotion English prose of the graver sort reaches the highest point of excellence it has yet attained. Saintsbury hardly overstates the case in this praise: "The Prayer-book rhythm, that *wonderful echoing accompaniment of pure sound (not merely suiting of sound to sense)*,⁶³ is found in the Collects of the Burial Service, the simple but masterly rise and fall of the prayer of St. Chrysostom, and of the second Collect at Evensong, the victorious trenchancy of the Athanasian Creed, the varied modulation of the Litany, the *sustained* and yet alluring stateliness of the Church Militant Prayer, the majesty of the first and general Collect for Advent, the cunning and multiform excellence of those for the Epiphany, for Quinquagesima, for Palm Sunday, and Easter Eve, for the Fourth Sunday after Easter, for Trinity Sunday, and for others too many to mention. After these achievements it could hardly be said that anything was impossible in English which required either suggestiveness of expression, or *modulation of sound*, or exquisiteness of individual phrase."⁶⁴

It is of the very greatest significance for us that the zenith of English prose is characterized by magnificent rhythm that owes the largest part of its effect to the superbly built sentences that carry the sound on to the end with undiminished elevation; and that this flight is the direct result of the emotional demand of a content that insists upon a soaring medium of expression.

A final and later example is the prose of Milton, whose preeminently grand style in verse is accompanied in prose by sentences of impressive periodicity and preternatural length. The

⁶² The first Prayer Book is dated 1549; the revised version, 1552. Cf. J. H. Blount, *The Annotated Book of Common Prayer*, New York, E. P. Dutton and Company, 1889.

⁶³ The italics both here and elsewhere in this passage are my own.

⁶⁴ Saintsbury, *The Earlier Renaissance*, p. 250.

first two sentences of the work entitled *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England and Causes that hitherto have hindred it* include 528 words. The second sentence, of 382 words, is a remarkably fine example of the sustained tone enforced by periodic structure. The reader naturally falls, as he does in all well-built periodic sentences, into the elevated monotone of verse. It is not length alone but structure that holds up the tone, and the tension produces an elevation that is as natural as it is well-suited to the content.

Prose of the kind illustrated by the examples just cited has a distinct rhythm, and an elevation and loftiness of tone such as is possessed only by verse founded on the same principle and with the same object in view. The psychology underlying the two systems is the same. In each case the grand style is made the medium of expression for dignified themes, and the best examples of that style are found there. In each case that grand style is obtained, not merely by lofty and noble diction, but by actual elevation of the tones of the voice, maintained, in one case, by the periodic structure of the sentence, in the other, by the employment of the tense decasyllable.

CHAPTER IV.

ARSIS-THESIS VARIATION.

A striking confirmation of the theory of metric that has been developed in the preceding chapters is the frequent and unmistakable appearance, throughout the verse of the Chaucerian Tradition, of a variation whose whole value depends upon the maintenance of a strictly iambic scansion. This variation is that peculiar word-play which consists, not merely in the familiar device of repeating word or syllable in the stressed position for the sake of rhetorical emphasis, but in placing it now in thesis now in arsis and thus securing a subtler form of emphasis, namely, that brought about by verse-stress alone, independent of the usual prose emphasis and at variance with it. The poet thus adds to, or rather glorifies, the every-day prose use of iteration. In prose, when word or syllable is repeated, it is most likely to get precisely the same accent each time, unless wilfully varied for a certain purpose. Iteration, always a powerful instrument in skilful hands, is in prose made to serve the utilitarian purpose of enforcing the content. The poet does not stop here. To the simple iterative value, he adds an entirely new and much subtler quality, that of aesthetic variation.

Dr. W. F. Melton's study, *The Rhetoric of John Donne's Verse* (Baltimore, 1906), develops the thesis elaborately for the poetry of Donne. It is necessary to state here, in justice to myself, that I had noted the same phenomenon in the verse of Sir Thomas Wyatt; and, in a study of that verse read before the English Seminary of The Johns Hopkins University in December, 1905, I called attention to the peculiar word-play. The present study, then, owes nothing to Dr. Melton's work except the incentive to push on an investigation of the ultimate sources of the phenomenon.

I. ITERATION AND VARIATION.

The writer of a recent article,¹ recognizing repetition as a necessary part of artistic structure, has given it a two-fold function: First, and chiefly, that of *amplification*. "In order to give richness and diversity, depth and breadth to the main idea of a work of art, it is necessary that this idea be presented in a variety of relations; which means that it must be repeated in many different surroundings." The repetition of the various themes of a symphony in constantly changing harmonic environment illustrates the fact for music. Secondly, that of *intensification*. This function is "derived from the emotional effect of the reiterated impact of the same perception upon the consciousness preoccupied with the train of associations induced by the general idea of some work of art."

Schütze is dealing with iteration as an art-form fully developed, and is not concerned with its evolution from primitive simplicity; hence he puts amplification as its chief function. It seems better, however, to reverse his order, even for simple iteration in its most complex development. It cannot be denied that the primitive and still the most common and important function of iteration is that of intensification; that it is a purely emotional instrument of emphasis. This is its common function in prose and in most verse. That it is never wholly without artifice can, however, scarcely be denied, although Gummere counts it in poetry as "the main fact in all primitive song and as not an invention or grace of artistic poetry but the most characteristic legacy, barring rhythm, which communal conditions have made to art."² Gummere's phrase, however, only restates for us the extremely early and general use of iteration as a poetic instrument for emotional

¹ Martin Schütze, *Repetition of a Word as a Means of Suspense in the German Drama under the Influence of Romanticism*. Modern Philology, iv, 3, 507 ff.

² F. B. Gummere, *The Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 194.

effect. It remains to be proved that any poetry, however simple, is not consciously artificial.

Whatever its beginning, it is certain that the earliest poetry we possess makes frequent use of the device of repetition, and it is equally certain that its purpose and effect here is precisely that which is evident in prose, the emotional effect of intensification or stress of the repeated idea. To justify this statement, one needs only to recall Psalm cxxxvi, with its iterated refrain, *For his mercy endureth for ever*. The sole impression is that of intense emphasis of the idea of gratitude and praise. The same may be said with equal truth of the refrain of the ballad or of the repetition of the single word in verse or prose. The totality of impression in each case is simple emphasis.

But this primitive function is followed almost immediately, if, indeed, it be not accompanied, by the function of artistic expression or, to use Schütze's phrase, of *amplification*. The emphasis is made to contribute to the general artistic effect, and the reader or hearer experiences a feeling of satisfaction in the mere repetition of the same sound; much the same sense of aural gratification as that afforded by rime, which, indeed, largely replaces the earlier alliteration. The two functions of emphasis and of adornment thus combine early to strengthen and beautify the work. In the course of time, and as the verse becomes more and more concerned with form for its own sake and less with mere substance, the primitive function becomes obscured, but not destroyed, by the less obvious and more artificial function of adornment, and the poet now uses iteration not so much for emphasis as to give that peculiar pleasure found in mere repetition which is one of the incompletely explained psychoses of a rhythm-loving race.

Up to this point no change has necessarily occurred in the iterated unit itself. Its function of intensification is still almost invariably indicated by emphasis of the factor itself. This is especially true of the single word, with which it is our business now to deal. The natural tendency in both prose and verse is to emphasize this iterated word, and the poets do this

by placing it uniformly under the ictus, even when it has lost its primitive function of real emphasis and taken on the secondary function of adornment. In a highly artificial period, however, a new form of emphasis would naturally develop. "Repetition in art," says Schütze (p. 508 ff.), "never occurs unaccompanied by some variation. In its structural function variation is implied in the very purpose of achieving variety and amplitude of associations. But, even when intensification is desired, entire absence of variety would be monotonous and inartistic. Even repetitions of the same musical note are attended by variations in intensity, speed, quality of touch; all of which, though almost imperceptible, produce telling musical effects. . . . In a general way it may be said that modernity, development in all arts, can historically be shown always to have been attended by an increasing freedom of variation and by not a weakening, but a relegation to a less obvious, though quite as essential position of repetition. . . . As art develops the fundamental elements of it become more plastic, and elaboration takes greater freedom."³

This is precisely what took place in English poetry; and a unique element of variety is possible there because of the accentual character of the verse. The new variation adds to the effect of iteration by ringing the changes on accent, a device more effective in spoken verse than in that intended for perusal, and hence to be looked for in the older rather than in modern poetry. It lends fresh attraction to an old metrical trick, by adding to it a subtler character, by taking it out of the realm of a mere prose method and giving it distinctly poetical or rhythmical iterative power. This method is analogous to the equally subtle elevation of unstressed particles of relation to the dignity of position in the arsis, and the consequent accentuation of the articulative rather than the substantive elements of the line. Both methods are delicate differentiae between verse and prose, and both occur in verse of a highly artificial

³ Schütze, pp. 508, 509.

character, where either emotional stress or the poet's intense consciousness of his art outweigh the claim of simple prosaic emphasis.

The truth of this statement may be supported by an appeal to the most artificial of all forms of emotional expression,—vocal music. Granted that pure artifice is largely responsible for variations from prose stress, they ought to appear here. And so, indeed, they do. In Stainer's *Crucifixion* variety is secured in the last chorus, not by changing the musical phrase, which preserves its tones intact, but by deliberately shifting the accent by the substitution of half for quarter notes and *vice versa*. The phrases thus stand: "Is it nothing to you?" and "Is it nothing to you?" "Why will ye die?" and "Why will ye die?" The last example differs slightly from the first in that it makes use of two accents both common in prose. A recent instance shows variation of both musical phrase and word-accent. In Elgar's *The Kingdom* the same words are repeated to totally different melodic phrases and with different accentuations. Thus we have "So *He* was their Saviour" and "So *He was* their Saviour," and many other instances.⁴

Now, it is quite obvious that this sort of variation is done deliberately and with a purpose. The fact is unmistakable and has, indeed, been commented on by musical critics. Yet standard works on music, in striking analogy with ultra-orthodox canons of metric, condemn all variations from prose stress. One authority, supposing a case where accented syllables of the text come under unaccented notes of the music, and *vice versa*, says, "Such mistakes as these are, of course, never to be found in good music." Nevertheless, we are told, "the greatest composers are sometimes not sufficiently attentive to the accentuation of the words which they set to music." After giving examples of what I should call deliberate shift of prose stress for purposes of variety, from Weber's *Freischütz* and

⁴ Cf. *Academy* for Nov. 24, 1906. Elgar's work was sung for the first time in London during the Autumn of 1906, and for the first time in the United States in New York, March 26, 1907.

Handel's *Messiah*, and *Deborah*, the writer affirms that "the charm of the music makes the hearer overlook the absurdity of the mispronunciation." Handel's use is referred to his "imperfect acquaintance with our language."⁵ It does not seem to have occurred to this critic that musicians may purposely accent the text contrary to prose usage in order to secure still another effect in the emotional medium.

II. EVIDENCES OF THE VARIATION IN EARLIER ENGLISH VERSE.

As in the case of the subtler forms of accentuation treated before, so in the present case one is prepared for skepticism when the Chaucerians are named or even when greater poets are mentioned. But what say the doubters to lines like these from Chaucer?

Hir *cháffáre*^x was so thrifty and so newe
That every wight hath deyntee to *cháffáre*^x
With hem, and eek to sellen hem hire ware.

B 138-140.

But wo is hym that payen *móot* for al!
The sely housbonde algate *hé moste*^x paye;
Hé móot^x us clothe and *hé móot*^x us arraye.

B 1200-1202.

Nat that I may encreessen hir *hónóur*^x
For she herself is *hónour*^x and the roote
Of bountee, next hir sone, and soules boote.
O mooder mayde! O mayde mooder fre!

O bussh *unbrént*^x, *brénnýnge*^x in Moyses sighte!

B 1654-1658.

⁵ Cf. *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians*. Edited by George Grove. London, Macmillan and Co., 1879, Vol. I, p. 15 ff.

Heere is a *míteyn*^x eek, that ye may se;

He that his hand wol putte in this *mitayn*^x

He shal have multipliyn of his grayn.

C 372-374.

For *smále*^x tithés ánd *fór*^x *smál* offrynge.

D 1315.

In^x *dívers*^x art and *ín*^x *divérse* figures.

D 1486.

I may nat plese hym in no maner cas.

O *Thómas*, je vous dy, *Thomás!* *Thomás!*

D 1832.

O moral Gower, this book I directe

To *thée*, and *tó thee*, philosophical Strode.

Troilus V 1857.

Se ye nat, Lord, how *mánkynde* it destroyeth?

An hundred thousand bodyes of *mankýnde*

Han rokkes slayn, al be they nat in mynde,

Which *mánkynde* is so fair part of thy werk

.

Toward *mankýnde*, but how thanne may it bee.

F 876-879, 882.

Robbe^x bothé *róbbed* and *robbóurs*^x

And *gíle* *gíled* ánd *gílóurs*^x.

Rose 6823, 6824.

Occleve's examples are equally convincing:

The *riche* he robbid eek of hir *richésse*^x.

Jereslaus's Wife 70.

O *húmble* maidé who is it that can

The debonaire *humbléssé*^x tellen al.

Regement 3582, 3583.

Of *déth*, be thi *deth déth* fele I me styng
O *pûrè* modier, what schalt thou now seye?

Pore *Máryè*! thi witte is now away.

María, nay, but ' *márred* ' I the call.⁶

Lamentation of the Green Tree, 215-218.

Heer up, *heer* down; *heer* honour, *heer* reproof;

Now hool, *now* seek; *now* bounte, *nów* myscheef.

Regement 48, 49.

How close kin this method of the Tradition is to that of more recent verse, may be judged from one or two passages from Shakespeare. The greater part of his iteration is without arsis-thesis variation; but the following lines are types of a large body of verse where the element of emphasis is certainly subordinated to variation of stress:

Were *sháme* enough to *sháme* thee wert thou not *shameléss*.
3d *Henry VI*, I, 4, 120.

But *oñe*, *poór oñe*, *oñe poór* and loving child,
But *oñe* thing to rejoice and solace in.

R J IV, 4, 46, 47.

The following example is an unusually good one if initial inversion be allowed; and in this case the rhetorical emphasis indicates that inversion.

Part of *your cáres* you give me with *your crown*.

Yóur cáres set up do not pluck *mý cáres* down.

My cáre is loss of *cáre*, by old *cáre* done;

Yóur cáre is gain of *cáre*, by new *cáre* won.

The *cáres* I give I have, though given away.

.

⁶ Cf. EETS. Ext. Ser. 72, XLIII, 213 ff.; 72, 76, 2082.

Ȃy^x ño; ño^x, aȃy; for I must nothing be;

Therefore ño^x nó, for I resign to thee.

Richard II, iv, 1, 194 ff.

A brief examination of the usual iteration employed by these same poets shows that they used the more infrequent and subtler method of arsis-thesis variation deliberately and with purpose. When Chaucer has mere repetition in mind, he writes in this style:

For whoso wólde senge a cáttes skýn,
 Thanne wólde the cát wel dwéllen in his in;
 And if the cáttes skýn be slyk and gay,
 She wól nat dwélle in house half a dáy;
 But forth she wóle, er any dáy be dawed,
 To shewe hir skýn, and goon a-cáterwawed.

D 349-354.

In this characteristic iterative passage, the repeated words invariably occur in the same position in the foot, although five of them are played with, and there are fifteen repetitions in the six lines. This illustrates Chaucer's usual method, and is one of hundreds of similar examples of iteration.

Occleve, too, knows how to repeat without arsis-thesis variation. He writes:

No gráunt to gráunt at al, than that your gráunt.

Regement 4801.

That mán became thi selfe, for mánnes nede;

And mán thu taughtist to be vertuows.

The Angel's Song 30, 31.

Hawes writes,

Fare wéll, swete herte! farewéll, farewéll, farewéll!

Adiéu, adiéu! I wold I were you by!

Pastime, p. 98.

and his fearful and wonderful iterated series in the *Pastime of*

Pleasure (Chapters XXI, XXXI, and XLIV) show almost uniformly unvaried repetition.

It is scarcely necessary to give further examples of this common method of iteration, dear to the heart of the Chaucerians and the Elizabethans. The 250 pages of Wurth's study, *Das Wortspiel bei Shakspeare* (Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, i. Bd., Wien u. Leipzig, 1895), are crowded with examples, and these are characteristic of the usual word-play in English. Most of them are uses of words either for emphasis, or in the double sense, as in puns, or for the purpose of mere repetition. Hence, in the majority of cases, the word appears in arsis, that the ictus may give it emphasis. A few cases show deliberate arsis-thesis variation. The common use appears in Spenser's line,

Glad of such *lücke*, the *lückelesse* *lucky* mayd.

F Q I, VI. 19.

Even when the entire phrase is repeated in inverse order, the poet manages to keep the same accents when he wants to do so, and to change them when that is desired. Two lines from Chaucer illustrate a combination of the methods; simple iteration in spite of inverted order in the first line, arsis-thesis variation in the second:

O móoder^x máyde! O máyde^x móoder^x fre!

O bussh^x unbrént, brénnýnge^x in Moyses sighte!

B 1657, 1658.

Oceleve shows a noticeable fondness for the inverted order with arsis-thesis variation; but he can invert and keep the accents. The following lines illustrate his two methods:

Thyn^x eénde^x ís cómén, cómén^x ís thyn^x eénde.

How to learn to die, 134.

O hérkneth^x nów, hérknéth^x nów alle yee.

Ibid., 421.

After a comparison of the two methods of repetition, the conclusion is irresistible that arsis-thesis variation was certainly known to the poets of the Chaucerian Tradition and employed by them as a conscious art-form. Melton, in a recently published study of the phenomenon in the verse of John Donne, admits examples in Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Pope, Cowley, and Swinburne; but expresses the opinion that Donne's predecessors and followers did not use the device as a conscious art-form. Thus, of Chaucer we are told (p. 152), "It does not seem that he purposed the effect unless it be in such lines as the last given." Of Pope (p. 153), "He may have been unconscious of the varying pitch of his words." Of Milton's famous line,

^x ^x ^x
Weep nó more woful shepherds, wéep nò móre,
Lycidas 165.

it is said, "In Elegiac movement such variation is expected as a natural expression of the poet's emotion" (p. 154).⁷ Such assertions surely will not stand in the face of Chaucer's lines just quoted, or before Shakespeare's few but obvious verses. Spenser's similar trifling,—

^x ^x ^x
O, tóo deare lóve, love bought with death too déare,
F Q I, II, 31.
Ah deare Sansjoy, next dearest to Sansfoy,
^x ^x ^x ^x
Cause óf my nêw griefe, cáuse óf my nêw jôy,
F Q I, I, 45.

and that remarkable line from *Macbeth*,

^x
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stúff,
Macbeth V, III, 44.

are certainly not the result of mere accident. Mr. Benson suspects the truth when he says, "By the way, how careless the

⁷ The interesting facts connected with this line are discussed at the end of this chapter.

repetition of 'stuff'd,' 'stuff' in that line! And yet it can't be unintentional, I suppose?" (*Upton Letters*, Feb. 16, 1904.)

Although Melton admits that Donne "differs from other poets only in excess . . . both as to multiplicity of appearance and indications of purpose" (p. 152), it is evident that he considers the phenomenon sporadic in other poets. He says, for example (p. 191), "He (Donne) extends throughout a poem what is to be found in only one or two lines of a poem by another." He indulged "habitually in what others indulged in only occasionally." After mentioning the various suggestions made as to the source of Donne's style, Melton suggests *Tottel's Miscellany* as the probable source, and cites a few examples of Wyatt's use of the variation.⁸ It is the purpose of this chapter to show that Wyatt learned the art from Chaucer and the Chaucerians, and that they, in turn, inherited it from a much earlier source. The line of descent of arsis-thesis variation can, in short, be traced from the Latin hymns of the Church in England down to modern times. John Donne represents the apotheosis of the cult, and might have taken the idea from a number of sources. With this genealogy, and particularly with the florescence of the device in the highly artificial verse of the Chaucerian Tradition, we are now concerned.

III. HISTORY OF THE VARIATION IN ENGLISH VERSE.

It is barely possible that iteration is, as Gummere would have it, a legacy of communal conditions.⁹ It is, undoubtedly, one of the commonest and most popular features of all poetry, primitive and modern, and a characteristic of artificial verse in all ages and tongues. The Greeks used it, and were especially artful when puns were to be made in the line. Here one finds early punning in which the play of accents, impossible to escape the Greek ear, gives a foreshadowing of the

⁸ Cf. Melton, *Donne*, p. 188 ff.

⁹ Cf. Gummere, p. 194 ff.

phenomenon of arsis-thesis variation. In the Alexandrian verse of Theocritus are at least two examples of this:

Ἡρακλέην δ' ἥρωες ἐκερτόμεον λιπονναυτον
οὐνεκεν ἠρώησε τριακοντάζυγον Ἄργώ¹⁰

Idyl XIII, 73, 74.

ἐξ ὄρεος πένδημα καὶ οὐ Πενδῆα φέροισαι¹¹

Idyl XXVI, 26.

What sins of iteration Latin versifiers could commit is well illustrated by the dreadful line that Martianus Capella ascribes to Ennius (239-169 B. C.).

O Tite, tute tate, tibi tanta tyrannae tutulisti.¹²

1. *The Verse of the Troubadours.*

The Troubadours made word-play a system, governed by the *Leys Damors*.¹³ Verse now saw the triumph of artificiality and the glorification of mechanism.¹⁴ The reign of pure artifice spread from France into Spain and Italy, and, from at least two Romance languages, penetrated English literature and flourished there.

Petrarch's connection with the cult is of peculiar interest. For our purpose the poet's use of word-play is of importance.

¹⁰ "For a runaway they girded at Heracles, the heroes, because he roamed from Argo of the sixty oarsmen." (Lang.)

¹¹ "From the mountain bearing not *Pentheus* but *repentance*." (Lang.)

¹² Given by Wurth, p. 138.

¹³ *Las Leys Damors*, or *Flors del Gai Saber*, was composed by Guilhem Molinier, secretary or chancellor of the society established in Toulouse in 1323, the *Collège du Gay Scavoir*. The work contains three parts: Grammar, Metric, and Rhetoric. It was edited by G. Arnoult, 3 vols., 1841-1843.

¹⁴ Cf. Justin H. Smith's *The Troubadours at Home*, 2 vols., New York and London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1899. Volume II, Chapter XXVIII, p. 281 ff. includes an elaborate treatment of the art of the Troubadours, with notes on versification (p. 444 ff.). The bibliography in Vol. I, xv ff. is complete. Sismondi's chapter on Provençal versification (*Historical View of the Literature of the South of Europe*, Translated by Roscoe for the Bohn Library, Vol. I, Chap. III) is interesting.

Ernst Raab's *Studien zur poetischen Technik Petrarcas*, Leipzig, 1890, gives valuable information on that subject. The author is disturbed by the prevalence of word-play in Petrarch, and remarks (p. 10), "Merkwürdig aber muss es für uns immerhin bleiben dass Petrarca, der ernste Mann, der tiefe Denker und Gelehrte, inmitten von Versen welche die glühende Leidenschaft seiner unglücklichen Liebe zu Laura di Sade aussprechen sollen, an kleinlichen Wortspielen Gefallen finden konnte." (Cf. M. Marius Pieri, *Pétrarque et Ronsard*, Marseille, Libraire Laffitte, 1895, p. 192 ff.)

The fully developed literature of Provence presented a vast body of highly artificial verse, relying in large measure for its effect upon various kinds of iteration, and overlooking no method of repetition that could give musical quality to the line or unity to the stanza. It would be interesting to know if there was also any idea of variation of stress in that iteration. That feature could, of course, come only through a strongly marked accentual rhythm, and to determine the possibility of such movement in Provençal verse a brief consideration of the metric is made necessary.

The prosody of the Troubadours was not essentially different from that of modern Romance verse.¹⁵ The number of syllables was the starting point; word-accent was variable and might fall on almost any syllable. At the same time, there was often in the octosyllable a pretty regular iambic movement, no doubt due to the influence of the Ambrosian hymns. The decasyllable does not show this iambic tendency. The *Leys Damors* say, "The accent is a regular melody or manner of the voice attaching itself specially to one syllable," and add that accentuation is a manner of singing, even in reading and speaking. Still, as Stengel says, when an even number of syllables precedes the accented one there is naturally a trochaic movement;

¹⁵ The summary that follows is based upon Smith's Chap. xxviii and upon other sources mentioned in the text. Smith's work is, of course, based upon the best authorities, and furnishes a convenient form of general reference.

and when the number is odd, an iambic movement. A musical rendition of the lines would undoubtedly bring about a certain regular alternation of stressed and unstressed syllables, the rhythm being imposed by the melody, just as the hymns of the Church frequently derived their metre from the tune, independent of either accent or quantity.¹⁶ The possibility that the verse of the Troubadours was so read or sung, with marked accentual rhythm, is strengthened by the evidence of the older French monuments. The tenth century *Passion Poem*, and the *Life of St. Léger*, the eleventh century fragment of the *Alexander Romance*, ascribed to Alberic of Besançon, all in octosyllabic verse, are unquestionably accentual,¹⁷ with marked iambic movement, the rhythm a reproduction of that of the Ambrosian hymns. This strongly marked iambic movement continued into later French verse. Schipper says (*Metrik* I, 79), "In der mittelalterlich-lateinischen Poesie, sowie auch in der romanischen, ist . . . eine regelmässige Aufeinanderfolge von stärker und schwächer betonten Silbe oder von Hebungen und Senkungen Gesetz, die beide von gleichen Wert für den Rhythmus sind." Of certain passages from the *Roman de Brut* (A. D. 1155), he says (*Metrik* I, 107), "Wir haben hier ein Versmass von im Ganzen jambischen Rhythmus vor uns."¹⁸

2. The Influence of the Troubadours upon English Verse.

The question of accentual rhythm for the verse of the Troubadours is, however, of no essential importance in the history of arsis-thesis variation in English verse. It still remains possible, accent or no accent in Romance verse, that English versifiers of the troubadour type may have learned the trick

¹⁶ Cf. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 207.

¹⁷ Cf. Gaston Paris, *Romania* I, 295.

¹⁸ Cf. C. L. Crow, *Zur Geschichte des Kurzen Reimpaars im Mittelenglischen*, Göttingen, 1892, p. 6: "Im Französischen besteht das Schema des kurzen Reimpaars aus zwei durch Endreime gebundenen Versen von je vier jambischen Füßen, meist mit Cæsur nach dem zweiten."

The Spanish troubadour poetry also lends itself to this interpretation. Although Castilian verse may have been governed by a system of strict syllabification without accentual rhythm,¹⁹ an accentual movement of the verses might assert itself in the mind of English readers, and could not fail to develop when the lines were read aloud or sung by English voices.

3. *Gower's Ballades.*

An interesting confirmation of the theory that the English poets knew arsis-thesis variation in French verse is offered by the occurrence of the variation in French lines written by an Englishman, and no less an Englishman than Gower himself. Gower's *Ballades* in French,²⁰ clearly inspired by troubadour methods, show traces of the variation. If the *Ballades* were examples of purely syllabic, non-accentual verse, their numerous iterations would represent no metrical novelty, for mere iteration is the hall-mark of Provençal models and Gower would have learned it there; but Gower's lines, as has been said several times before, have an unmistakably English rhythm, in both the *Ballades* and the *Mirour*, and combine French syllabification with English accent, in this respect differing from the work of Anglo-Norman writers.²¹ Repetition, then, in the *Ballades*, accompanied by variation of stress, may be safely taken as genuine arsis-thesis variation, and it may be concluded with good reason that Gower recognized the possibility of a new artifice in the already over-wrought line of the troubadours, and added the new element of variety by giving to simple iteration the fresh accentual touch with play of stresses. The following lines seem to indicate as much; when they are read with the English rhythm that is their peculiar characteristic, the variation makes itself known at once:

¹⁹ Cf. Valmar, *Estudio sobre las cantijos de Sta. Maria*, 2d edicion, Madrid, 1897. Chap. VII deals with the versification of Galician poetry.

²⁰ Cf. Macauley, *Gower*, Vol. I.

²¹ Cf. Macauley, *Gower*, I, XV, XLIV, XLV, LXXIV.

U j'aim toutdítz et lóutdis ameraí.²² *Bal. iv, 2.*

Dangér, qui tolt d'amour toute la feste.

.

Au point quant *dánger* me respondera.

.

Q'est en *dangér*, falt qu'il merci supplie.

.

Que *dánger* maint en vostre compaignie.

.

Q'est en *dangér* falt qu'il merci supplie. *Bal. xxx.*

Amóur qui des natures est regent

Mais l'omme qui de *résón* ad le pois

Cil par *resón* doit *ámer* bonement

.

De bon *amóur* a verité plainere

Lors est *amóur* d'onour la droite miere.

Bon *áamour* doit son *diéu* *amér* aincois

Qui *són dieu aime* il aime verraidement,

Si ad de trois *amóurs* le primer choís;

Et apres *diéu* il doit secondement

.

Lors est *amóur* d'onour la droite miere

Le tierce point dont *áamour* ad la vois,

Amóur en son endroit ceo nous aprent.

Bal. xlix.

4. *The Influence of the Hymns of the Church upon English Verse.*

The influence of the verse of the troubadours, however, even if its existence were absolutely proved, must occupy, after all,

²² Compare this line with the similar lines of La Fontaine,

Toujours étoit en oraison

Et *toújours* ses soeurs à la grille,

Conte de x x x.

upon which the English mind imposes the accent indicated, whether it belongs there or not.

a place of secondary importance. Another and more powerful force had been at work for centuries before the lyrics of Provence reached English ears. This force was the potent influence of the hymns of the Church. To this source of arsis-thesis variation I am inclined to attach special importance for several very good reasons. In the first place, the hymns were the most familiar and most frequently heard forms of verse known to the English, and must have been in the British Isles, as everywhere on the Continent, the mightiest factor in the development of the native poetry. Ker says (*The Dark Ages*, pp. 199, 200): "No literary work in the Dark Ages can be compared for the extent and far-reaching results of its influence with the development of popular Latin verse. The hymns went further and affected a larger number of people's minds than anything else in literature." (Cf. Saintsbury, *English Prosody*, I, p. 16ff.) They had been sung throughout England since the foundation of the Church in that country, and were known to clergy and laity alike.²³ In the second place, the strongly accented rhythm of the hymns could not fail to impress itself upon the minds of a race whose own verse was of the same accentual character. Sensitive English ears would not fail to catch the effect of playing accents, nor would they neglect to emphasize the natural shifts of stress incident to the inflected forms of the Latin tongue, especially when the poet himself took care to let his ictus bring out the force of changed accent in different forms upon the same root-syllable. Iteration in the hymns, with the added element of marked accent, an element whose existence in troubadour verse is not unquestionably proved, would undoubtedly result in arsis-thesis variation, for play of accent is unavoidable in a strict accentual rhythm when iteration is frequent.

That the hymns actually had the strictest accentual rhythm

²³ An interlinear Anglo-Saxon version exists in a Durham manuscript of the eleventh century. It has been printed for the Surtees Society in Volume XXIII.

is a well-established fact.²⁴ The ultimate development of accentual Latin verse made the movement of the strict metrical scheme, the recurrence of strong accents at regular intervals, the supreme factor in the line, a factor to which all feeling for quantity and even for the usual stresses of prose was subordinated.²⁵ The tendency in such verse, however, as Miller has pointed out,²⁶ is toward the use of a secondary accent for the ictus in cases where no quantitative justification is possible. Cases of "inversions" and "wrenched accents" undoubtedly belong in this class of secondary accents.

We are not concerned, however, with tracing the decay of feeling for quantity. It is sufficient for the purpose of getting arsis-thesis variation in the hymns to know that the accentual rhythm was strongly marked and that it brought about variations in stress. Such variations must impress the listener, and must appeal especially to poets in constant contact with the mechanism of verse. One can imagine the effect of this accent-play when heard continuously from century to century.

Whether the hymn-makers themselves were conscious of the variation is a matter wholly apart from this study. I am inclined to think they were. The definitely accented rhythm beating in the ear of the composer must have revealed the play of the accents. There are passages, too, where the natural variation of stress, as in various inflected forms upon the same root, indicate a conscious use of arsis-thesis variation.

²⁴ Cf. Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 199 ff.; C. M. Lewis, *Foreign Sources of Modern English Versification*, Yale Studies in English, No. 1, Halle, 1898; J. J. Slicher, *The Origin of Rhythmical Verse in Late Latin*, Chicago, 1900. These three studies cover the ground and refer to other works on the subject.

²⁵ Ker, *The Dark Ages*, p. 207, goes so far as to eliminate both accent and quantity and make the hymn-tune the only measure of the rhythm. "A large amount of mediæval Latin verse," says he, "is really not verse in either of the two great classes used by Bede, neither 'metrical' nor 'rhythmical,' but simply a provision of syllables to fit a tune, leaving it to the tune to impose its own quantity and accent."

²⁶ Cf. Miller, *Secondary Accent*, pp. 17, 18.

The Latin Hymns.

The following examples are cited from the collection of Wackernagel,²⁷ Vol. I; reference is made to page and column. The citations have been confined to the period beginning with Ambrose (340 ?-397) and ending with the thirteenth century. In the absence of positive evidence in favor of initial inversion, it has been dispensed with where the context seems to indicate regular scansion accompanied by word-play. In several cases the context has been given where no arsis-thesis variation occurs within it, but where simple iteration shows the poet's frame of mind while composing.

de luce lucem proferens

^x*Lux* ^x*lúcis* et fons luminis
dies diem inluminans.

p. 13.^a

In ^x*pátre* totus filius

et totus in verbo ^x*patér*.

p. 14.^b

^x*nóctis*, profundae pervigil,

^x*Noctúrna* ^xlux viantibus

a ^x*nócte* noctem segregans.

p. 16.^a

^x*cantáte* ^x*cánticúm* novum.

p. 21.^a

^x*cantémus* ^x*cánticum* novum.

p. 22.^a

Portus ^x*nautá* suos littora ^x*náutá*.

p. 23.^a

²⁷ Philipp Wackernagel, *Das deutsche Kirchenlied*, Leipzig, 1864.

De claustris ^x*virginalibus*
^x*virginis* ^x*virgo* natus est.

p. 47^b.

^x*Maria* ^x*máter* gratiae
^x*matér* misericordiae.

p. 64.

Panem ^x*nostrúm* cotidie
 de te edendum tribue.

Remitte ^x*nóbis* debita,
 ut *nós* ^x*nostris* remittimus.

p. 78.^b

^x*Tu* lumen *tú* splendor patris
^x*tu* spes perhennis omnium.

p. 78.^a

Et *nós* ^x*novi* per veniam
^x*novúm* ^x*canámus* ^x*cánticum*.

p. 80.

Et ^x*virgo* fructu florida
^x*virgóque* nato gravida.

p. 82.^a

Christe qui *lúx* es et dies
 Noctis tenebras detegis
^x*Lucisque* ^x*lúmen* crederis
 Lumen beatum *práedicans*
^x*Precamur* sancte domine
 Defende nos in hac ^x*nocté*

Sit nobis in te requies

Quietam ^xnóctem tribue.²⁸

p. 83.^a

^xLux ^xlúcis invisibilis.

p. 83.^a

^xPacáti ^xpáce nobili.

p. 85.^b

Qui confidunt in ^xdóminó

^xdómínatore maximo.

p. 94.^a

Cui ^xmillia ^xmíllium,

p. 94.^b

Ecce ^xquám bonum sublime

et ^xquám iocundum utique.

p. 94.^b

Per ^xpéccatricis meritum

^xpeccáti ^xsolve debitum.

p. 102.^b

The hymn of Bernard of Clairvaux, *Jubilus rythmicus de nomine Jesu*, p. 117 ff., contains a number of instances of the variation, to which I refer by number of line:

1. Jesu ^xdulcís memoria.

4. eius ^xdulcís praesentia.

²⁸ Cf. D. W. Lyon, *Christe qui lux es et dies*, AJPh. xix, 70 ff. I have used the version given by Miss Lyon on p. 81, of which she says: "This is the version which seems to have been the most widespread both in England and on the Continent, and to have been the original of the largest group of translations." Reference is made in the notes to *Surtees Society*, Vol. I, 271; *York Breviary*; *Hymnarium Sarisburiense*, p. 60.

7. nil cogitatur *dúlci^xus*
 59. Jesum ardentem *quaérite*,
 60. *quaeré^xndo* inardescite
 121. Jam *quód* quaesivi video,
 122. *quód^x* concupivi teneo.
 151. Omni *dúlcóre^x dúlcior^x*

Bernard's *Rythmica oratio ad unum quodlibet membrorum Christi patientis et a cruce pendentis*, p. 120 ff., shows a constant play upon the personal pronouns *me* and *te* and their possessive forms. Note, also, the use of the preposition *in* both arsis and thesis. Intended or not, the variation appears many times in this long hymn.

flos de *spína^x spína^x* carens,
 flos *spínéti^x gloriá^x*;
 Nos *spínétum^x*, nos peccati,
spína^x sumus cruentati,
 sed tu *spínae^x* nescia.

p. 125.^a

Tu *thronús^x* es Salomonis
 cui nullus par in *thrónis^x*.

p. 126.^a

O *María^x stella^x máris^x*.

p. 126.^b

Paradisi haec *fluénta^x*
 nova *flúunt^x* sacramenta.

p. 130.^b

Gaude ^x*virgo* mater Christi
quia sola meruisti
o ^x*virgó* purissima.

p. 150.^a

O ^x*Beáta* ^x*béatórum*

p. 157.^a

The Latin Songs.

An interesting group of examples of arsis-thesis variation is that furnished by the Latin secular verse of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Two notable collections of this verse are the *Carmina Burana*²⁹ and *The Political Songs of England*;³⁰ from these the examples are taken.

This so-called "popular" poetry³¹ betrays in every line its clerical origin, and it is not going too far, perhaps, to say that arsis-thesis variation in the songs is direct evidence of the influence of the hymns. Striking instances of the direct influence of religious verse upon the popular poetry are the two parodies of the famous hymns, *Vexilla regis prodeunt* and *Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis*,³² found in Wright's collection, pp. 258 and 259.

Although the infrequency of the variation in the songs militates somewhat against the theories of conscious artifice on

²⁹ T. A. Schmeller, *Carmina Burana. Lateinische und deutsche Lieder und Gedichte einer Handschrift des XIII Jahrhunderts aus Benedictbeuern*, Breslau, 1883. Cf. Jeanroy, *Origines de la Poésie Lyrique en France*, p. 304 ff.

³⁰ Thomas Wright, *The Political Songs of England, from the Reign of John to that of Edward II*, Camden Society, 1839.

³¹ Interesting matter concerning these verses may be found in Max Haessner's *Die Goliardendichtung und die Satire im 13. Jahrhundert in England*, Leipzig, 1905.

³² Both these hymns were composed by Fortunatus (A. D. 530-609) and were and are used during Passiontide. Cf. John Julian's *A Dictionary of Hymnology*, London, John Murray, 1892.

the part of the composer and of imitation on the part of English poets, certain songs seem to have a decided tendency toward the play of stress, and the body of examples is large enough to serve as confirmatory evidence.

Carrina Burana.

quique ^x*mínus* habuit
et ^x*mínús* attribuit,
^x*mínus* reddit gratiæ

p. 12, XIV, 2.

Nomen a ^x*solémnibus*
trahit ^x*sólemniacum*,
^x*Sólemnís* exigitur
^x*omnis* preter monachum
.
Exultemus
et ^x*cantémus*
^x*cánticúm* victoriæ.

p. 33, XXVIII, 1.

Quís est verax, *quís* est bonus
vel ^x*quís* Dei portat onus?
Ut in uno claudam plura,
mórs exercet sua iura.

4.

Iam ^x*mórs* regnat in prælatis.

p. 43, LXXIII, 3 ff.

^x*Póetá* pauperior

omnibus ^xpo^xétis

p. 74, CXCIV, 2.

^xámor melle dulcior

felle fit ^xam^xárior,

^xámor cecus caret pudicitia.

p. 150, 60, 1.

The song *De Phyllide et Flora* (p. 155 ff.) contains several instances of the variation; reference is made to stanza:

Edant ^xámbe virgines

et ^xambé regine,

.

non sunt ^xfórmē virginum,

sed ^xfórmé divine.

St. 3.

sed sunt ^xpárum ^xímpares

et ^xparúm hostiles.

St. 4.

O ^xvítá militie,

^xvíta singularis.

St. 12.

^xres ^xcreáta dignior

omni ^xcréatura.

St. 14.

^xPári forma virgines

et ^xparí colore,

pá^x*rí* voto militant
et *parí*^x pudore.

St. 44.

Á^x*mór* habet iudices,
Á^x*mór* habet jura;
sunt *Á*^x*mó*^x*rís* iudices.

St. 77.

sécundúm^x scientiam
et *secúndum*^x *morem*^x.

St. 78.

The Political Songs of England.

Fás et *né*^x*fás* ambulant
pene casu *pari*,
Vix est jam quem pudeat
né^x*fás* operari.

p. 48.

Qui *plús*^x mali perpetrat
plús appretiatur.

p. 49.

Competenter per *Ró*^x*bért*,
ró^x*bbur* designatur.

p. 49.

Vir *pígér*^x et tepidus
Galfridus est pro certo.

Tempus *pígér*^x protrahit
omni tardus hora.

p. 50.

Cum ^xsecúnda ^xsecundávit. p. 55.

Pars ^xpílosa foris paret,
Sed introrsus ^xpílis caret. p. 55.

Calamus velociter
^xscríbe sic ^xscribéntis. p. 55.

In ^xclaustró se ^xcláuderé. p. 73.

Sic si ^xDéus fortibus vincere dedisset,
Vulgus laudem talibus non ^xDeó dedisset. p. 78.

Dé ^xDeó, superbiam ^xDéus hanc elidit. p. 78.

^xFúit in confinio, sed divisionis
^xÁffúit praesidio lapis angularis. p. 85.

Et ^xmox inter ^xmáximos student collocare. p. 86.

Nam ^xrex omnis regitur legibus quas legit;
^xRéx Saül repellitur, quia leges fregit. p. 94.

Qui negat servitium quo ^xDeó tenetur.
Rursum sciat populum non suum sed ^xDéi. p. 107.

Quid ^xregnó conveniat

^x
régendó? num quaeret.

p. 110.

^x *Máternam* non habuit, quod ^x *matér* non erat.

.

^x
 Qui *matérne* timeant regnum dura pati.

p. 112.

^x *Cómmunís* conveniens est ^x *commúnitati*.

p. 112.

Pepigerunt plurimi ^x *sálvam* te ^x *sálváre*.

p. 122.

^x *Túrbans* ^x *túrbas* intra regnum

nunc ^x *turbátur* ^x a foris.

p. 260.

5. *Arsis-Thesis Variation in The Ormulum.*

Just when the artifice was adopted in English verse is a question probably not to be answered. It is sufficient for the purposes of our genealogy to find it in the *Ormulum* (about A. D. 1200). Two facts connected with its appearance there are of peculiar importance: First, the first few hundred lines contain numerous examples; secondly, the variation is largely confined to compounds with strong secondary stress. These two facts indicate the poet's consciousness of what he was doing, and his deliberate method of using a familiar instrument, that of secondary accent, to carry out his purpose. Thus both arsis-thesis variation and the conscious use of secondary accent for the ictus seem to be confirmed in one of the earliest, and undoubtedly the most exact and careful, productions of Middle English verse.

In making selections from the *Ormulum*, I have omitted the

numerous cases of repetition, with varying stress, of the article, the conjunction, and such minor particles of speech. Unless clearly intended, in which case the effort is obvious, I do not believe these minor variations belong to our category.

The most interesting examples in *The Dedication to The Ormulum* are given below.³³ I have confined the examples to the *Dedication*; the results from its few lines are significant when the length of the entire poem is recalled.

Eggwhaer þær þu shallt findenn hemm amang *goddspélles*
wordess;

For whase mot to laewedd folle *larspell* off *góddspell*^x tellenn,
He mot wel ekenn manig word amang *goddspélles* wordess.
Annd ice ne mihhte nohht min ferrs agg wiþþ *goddspélles*
wordess.

ll. 27-30.

Góddspell^x onn Ennglissh nemmnedd iss *gód*^x word and *gód*
tiþennde

Gód^x ernnde forrþi þatt itt wass þurrr hallghe *góddspell*^x
wrihhtess

All wrohht annd writenn uppo boc off Cristess firste come

Off hu soþ Godd wass wurrþenn *mánn* forr all *mánnkínne*^x nede

Annd off þatt *mánnkinn*^x þurrr hiss daeþ wass lesedd ut off helle.
ll. 79-83.

Off all þiss *gód* uss brinngeþþ word annd errnde annd *gód*
tiþennde

Góddspell^x annd forr þi magg itt wel *Gód*^x errnde ben gehatenn

Forr mann magg uppo *góddspell*^xboc *gódnesses*^x findenn seffne.
ll. 88-90.

³³ The examples are from the text given in O. F. Emerson's *A Middle English Reader*, New York, 1905, p. 8 ff. The editor's notes, p. 252 ff., give adequate information as to authorship, date, texts, etc.

þur^xrh þátt^x hē comm to manne and þúr^xrh þátt^x hé warrþ mann
onn erþe.

þur^xrh þátt^x hē comm to wurþenn mánn forr all mánnkinne nede.
ll. 92 and 94.

þatt nán wihht nán enngell nán manne ne náness kinness shaffte.

O mánnkinn^x swa þatt it mánnkinn^x off helle mihhte lesenn

Ne gifenn mánnkinn^x lusst ne mahht to winnenn heffness blisse.
ll. 137 and 139-140.

Other examples, equally striking, can be found in the poem itself. Cf. ll. 1034-1040; 1095, 1096; 1132-1134; 1136-1140; 1145-1148; 1243-1245; 1267, 1268.³⁴ Crude and inartistic these examples undoubtedly are; but I cannot believe they are the result of mere chance or of syllable-counting. The English mind is opposed to the latter, and the inevitable accent would make the former impossible.

6. *Arsis-Thesis Variation during the Tradition.*

The testimony of the *Ormulum* indicates that, at the very beginning of the thirteenth century, the variation had found a foothold in English poetry. We are, however, particularly concerned with showing its use during the period of the Chaucerian Tradition, and must pass from Orm directly to Chaucer and Gower.

The lists of occurrences in Chaucer, Gower, Lydgate, Occleve, and Hawes prove beyond a doubt that the poets of the Tradition had notable example in the work of their two great predecessors, and that they took the fullest advantage of that precedent. The frequency of the artifice in certain writers, Occleve for example, is, in fact, quite remarkable, and indi-

³⁴ These citations are from Sweet's text in his *First Middle English Primer*, 2d ed., Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1895.

cates the existence of the variation as a distinct and popular fashion, not to say fad, in the verse of the time. This is precisely what we should expect in a verse so essentially artificial and dependent upon its own machinery for effect as was the archaic system of the Chaucerian Tradition.

In the list of examples that follows, made up from the work of the poets of the Tradition, I have not attempted to make a minute catalogue of occurrences, such as Melton has made for Donne, but have quoted only the most striking. In all poetry occur numberless instances of the variation in the articulative elements of speech. The constant repetition of the article, the preposition, the conjunction, in all forms of verbal expression, makes arsis-thesis variation of a certain kind inevitable in verse. Only when clearly intended, or when they belong to the work of a versifier with whom the variation is a mannerism, should these inevitable occurrences be considered seriously. Such examples are easily distinguished from those wherein artifice plays the largest part.

Neither have I catalogued variations of stress upon alliterating sounds, although that form of the variation constitutes a large class, and was, doubtless, a quite apparent and conscious artifice during the Tradition. Those interested in this particular kind of variation are referred to McClumpha's study of Chaucer's use of alliteration, and to Höfer's similar study of Gower. (C. F. McClumpha, *The Alliteration of Chaucer*, Leipzig, undated; Paul Höfer, *Alliteration bei Gower*, Leipzig, 1890.) McClumpha is disturbed by Chaucer's non-observance of the rules of alliteration, in that he allows the alliterating sound to occur in either thesis or arsis. This phenomenon, and the similar variation in the use of other syllables and of whole words, does not escape the author. He gives up the first as inexplicable because Chaucer follows no rule and hence "offers no fixed data from which to proceed in discussion" (p. 35). The variation of accent on syllables he ascribes to "metrical accent or . . . seemingly irregular and voluntary use on the writer's part" (p. 37). The variation

where entire words are concerned he classes as "exceptional to the general rule of employment" and "due to some difficulty in metre or rime, to both of which alliteration is always made secondary" (pp. 37, 38). It does not occur to him that Chaucer has a definite purpose in this playing with accents. Höfer attempts to explain the irregular use of alliteration in Chaucer and Gower by supposing its addition as an "ornament for the eye" (p. 69). Fortunately, he admits that his theory is not incontestable.

Though all cases of arsis-thesis variation are simply instances of repetition in alternately stressed and unstressed position, that is, alternately in arsis and thesis, the examples may be roughly divided into three classes, corresponding to three methods of use:

1. The accent is varied when the same word is repeated several times consecutively in the same grammatical construction, as a sort of formula; e. g., ^x*some* *sóme* ^x*sóme* ^x*and sóme*. This is a very common use, and confined for the most part to the non-substantive or structural features of a word-group, especially in *Anaphora*.

2. The accent is varied upon different compounds on the same stem.³⁵ In this group secondary stress materially assists in the variation. An illustration is *Rose* 7445,

Yet *fálse* was he, but his ^x*falsnésse*.

3. The accent is varied, when the same word is repeated, without reference to any definite system or scheme of phraseology. This is by far the most frequent and the most convincing use of arsis-thesis variation. It owes its power of conviction to the fact that no necessity of structure could have forced the versifier to vary his accents, and hence a deliberate use of variation may be assumed.

³⁵ This method corresponds to the vogue of *Replicació* in great favor with medieval lyrists. Cf. Lang, *Cancioneiro Gallego-Castelhano*, pp. 172, 212.

It has been impossible to group the examples in the following list with any degree of strictness under the three heads mentioned. A single example will often be found to combine two or more of the methods. An attempt has been made, however, at a rough classification.

When initial inversion eliminates the variation, I have preferred the non-inverted foot, believing that the poet, with word-play and variation of accent in mind, a mental condition obvious in most cases, read his line without the inversion destructive to the very effect he was aiming at. On the other hand, inversion has been made in lines where the poet's intention to make it seems clear. The context is, of course, the only safe guide in this matter.

Chaucer.³⁶

Arsis-thesis variation seems to be especially frequent in the *Rose* and the *Minor Poems*, and relatively infrequent in the *Canterbury Tales*. This fact is interesting in view of the influence the *Rose* is known to have had upon the work of the Tradition.

To^x you, my purse, and tó noon other wyght.
Compleynt to Purse 1.

For nóon is of so mochel pris,

Ne nó^x mān founden is so wys,
Ne nóon so high is of parage,

Ne^x nó^x mān founde of witt so sage,

No^x mān so hardy, né so wight

Ne^x nó^x mān of so mychel myght,

³⁶To the examples given here, add those cited in Section II of this chapter.

Noon^x so fulfilled of bounte.

Rose 4757 ff.

Nów am I knyght, now^x chasteleyne,

Now prelat, and now^x chapeleyne,

Now^x prest, now^x clerk, and now^x forstere;

Now am I maister, now^x scolere,

Now^x monke, now^x chanoun, now^x baily;

What ever myster man am^x I,

Nów am^x I prince, now^x am^x I page.

Rose 6327 ff.

Shamefást she was, in maydens shámefastnésse.

C 55.

And al so cértein^x as we knowe echoon

That we shul deye, as úncertéyn^x we alle.

E 124, 125.

O mooder mayde! O mayde mooder fre!

O bussh unbrént^x, brennyng^x in Moyses sighte!

B 1657, 1658.

Was never seen her bred beggyng^x

For they nolden beggen^x for no thing.

For many a lover^x in lovyng^x.

Rose 4450.

In hertis a dispeiryng hópe,

And full of hópe it is wanhópe

Wise woodnésse^x and wóde resoun

.

It is ^x*sike* ^x*héle* and ^x*hool* ^x*sekenésse*

.

Delite right ^x*fúl* of hevynesse,

And drerihed ^x*full* of gladnesse;

Bitter ^x*swetnésse* and *swéte* errour,

Right evell ^x*sávoured* good ^x*savóur*

Rose 4707 ff.³⁷

Withouten hir we ben ^x*accórded*

And we fynde in owre ^x*accordaunce*.

Rose 5846, 5847.

And ^x*Fálse-Semblant* had he sayne also,

But he knewe nat that he was *fálse*.

Yet *fálse* was he, but his ^x*falsnésse*

Ne coude he nat espye nor gesse;

For ^x*Semblant* was so slye wrought,

That ^x*Fálsenesse* he ne espyed nought.

Rose 7443 ff.

To ^x*fýsshén* synful menne we go,

For other ^x*fýsshynge*, ne ^x*fýsshe* we.

Rose 7490, 7491.

Gret ^x*swéryng* is a thyng abhominable,

And fals ^x*swéryng* is yet moore reprevable,

The heighe God forbad ^x*swéryng* at al,—

Witnesse on Mathew, but in special

³⁷ The passage, ll. 4703-4752, consists of a series of paradoxes describing Love. The poet calls even the variations of accent into service to enforce the contrasts.

Of *swéryng*^x seith the hooly Jeremye,
 Thou shalt seye sooth thyne othes, and nat lye
 And *swére* in doom, and eek in rightwisesse;

But ydel *swéryng*^x is a cursednesse.

.

Lo, rather he forbedeth swich *swéryng*^x.

C 631 ff.

That I *wólde*^x deye,—*hit*^x wól not so;

For whan I folwe *hit*^x, *hit*^x wól flee;

I *wólde* have hym, *hit*^x nyl nat me.

This is my peyne wythoute reed,

Alway *déyíng*^x and be not *déed*.

Blaunche 583 ff.

I may yow nat devyse al hir *beauté*^x,

But thus muche of hire *beauté*^x telle I may.

E 1746, 1747.

That *mý wyl*^x was his *wíll*^x instrument,—

This is to seyn, *mý wyl*^x obeyed *his wyl*^x.

F 568, 569.

Allas, *Scogán*^x! of oldé folk ne yonge,

Was never erst *Scogán*^x blamed for his tonge.

Lenvoy a Scogan 20, 21.

Thanne shulde I fallen in *wánhópe*^x.

Allas—in *wánhópe*^x ? nay pardee.

Rose 4432, 4433.

If thou fle *it*^x, *it*^x shal flee thee;

Folowe ^x*ít*, and *fólowen* shal ^x*ít* thee.

Rose 4783, 4784.

In all ^x*peréll* of soule and lyf,

And ^x*pérell* is, but men have grace.

Rose 4890, 4891.

But certeyn now I wole ^x*repénte*

And shulde I ^x*répente*? Nay, parde.

Be he kyng, knyght, or ^x*ribáude*;

And many a ^x*ribaude* is mery and *baúde*.

Rose 5673, 5674.

My sone, ^x*keepe* wel thy tonge and *kéepe* thy freend.

H 319.

^x*Forth*, pilgrim, *fórh!* ^x*Forth*, beste, out of thy stal.

Truth 18.

I flater noght, that may ^x*wíte* every *wýght*.

Mars 188.

Gower.

Gower seems to use the variation at rare intervals. The following cases occur in the *Confessio Amantis*:

^x*With* *súch* wepinge and *with* ^x*such* cri.

I, 2188.

^x*Ther* *wás* wepinge and *thér* ^x*was* wo.

II, 1049.

Höfer (p. 68) gives a number of similar examples.

^x*Some* *séyn* he dede wel ynowh

And *sóm* men *séyn* he dede amis.

III, 2112, 2113.

^x*Sometime* in Prus, ^x*sometime* in Rodes,

And ^x*sometime* into Tartarie.

IV, 1630, 1631.

Awey ^x*goth* dissh, awey ^x*goth* cuppe,
Doun ^x*góth* the bord, the cloth was uppe.

VIII, 797, 798.

Ye ^x*wíten* wel, and so ^x*wot* I.

VIII, 2883.

With the ^x*Rómeíns* to *Róme* ayein.

II, 2777.

What ^x*só* ^x*sche* ^x*wóle* ^x*só* ^x*wól* I,

Whan ^x*sche* ^x*wól* sitte, I knele by,

And *whán* ^x*sche* stant, than *wól* I stonde.

IV, 1171 ff.

Lydgate.

^x*Now* colde as isè *nów* as coles rede.

Complaint.

^x*Somwíles* olde and ^x*sómwhile* newe,
And also eke, who taketh hede

^x*Sommtýme* ^x*gréne*, ^x*sómtíme* rede,

^x*Sommtýme* ^xwhite as cloth of lake

.

^x*Somtýme* as any sugre soote.

Reson 3938 ff.

^x*Vénús* by exposicion,

Is seyde of ^x*vénym* and poysoune ;

And of ^x*vénym*, this the fame,

Vénus^x pleynly took her name.

For she venémýth^x many wyse.

Reson 3387 ff.

Venus ys sayde of vénquiss^xhing,

For she venqúyss^xsheth every thing.

Reson 4581, 4582.

Othir[^] with^x *mercí* your servant for to save,

Or mérciles^x that I mai be grave.

Temple 1038, 1039.

Was laude and honoure wíth^xin and wíth^xoute.

Temple 1301.

To bye man^xkýnde^x un^xkýnde^x creäture

Nightingale c. 182.

The sés^xon is so graciously,

For this sesón withouten fayle.

Reson 94, 95.

To do som^xme occupacioun

And draw the first to sómmé^x place.

Reson 468, 469.

Dyscórde^x to Dethé hathe ay byn a frende

For Dyscorde^x bryngeth many to her ende.

Assembly 1798, 1799.

Now mércie^x swete ! mércie^x my lyves quene !

And to youre grace of mércie^x yet I prey,

In yóur^x servise that your man may dey.

But and so be that^x I shall^x deye algate,

And^x thát^x I shál non other mercye have.

Complaint 516 ff.

Occleve.

Occleve is, perhaps, the chief representative of arsis-thesis variation during the Tradition. His use of it in repeated formulas, our first class, is striking:³⁹

^x*It* ^x*is* no manhode, *it* ^x*is* cowardyse. 61, 14, 178.

^x*To* ^x*thée* speke *I*, and this *I* ^x*tó* ^x*thée* seye. 61, 57, 20.

Ther-on ^x*wayte* *I*, *I* ^x*wáyte* on your bountee. 61, 58, 21.

^x*Some* ^x*óf* ^x*hém* grante, and *sóme* ^x*óf* ^x*hém* seyn "nay!" 61, 63, 19.

O ^x*wilt* ^x*thow* ^x*só*, *wilt* ^x*thów* make it ^x*só* strange;
Wilt ^x*thów* noon othir wysè do, quod he. 61, 151, 325, 326.

Syn ^x*só* good and *só* ^xgracious is shee. 61, 166, 739.

Who ^x*cán* ^x*hém* telle, *whó* ^x*cán* ^x*hém* expresse? 61, 188, 275.

O, ^x*hérkneth* ^x*nów*, *herknéth* ^x*now* alle yee. 61, 194, 421.

^x*Why* sette y so myn herte in Vanitee?
O, ^x*whý* ne had y lerned for to die?
Whý was y nat ferd of goddes maugree?
What eilid me to bathe in swich folie?
^x*Why* naddè reson gotten the maistrie

³⁹ For convenience of reference, the citations are made to (1) number in the EETS. Ext. Ser., (2) page, (3) line.

Of me, *why?*^x for my spirit was rebel.

61, 188, 281 ff.

Examples of the second class, variations of stress upon different compounds upon the same stem:

Han, in this *knýght*, put so feendly ententes,

.

Which yee han leid on his good old *knýghthóde*,
That now a wrecchid *knýght* men callé may.

61, 17, 283 ff.

ffor god woot a blynd *Coúnseilloúr* is he

Which that *conseílle*^x shal in a mateere.

61, 126, 463, 464.

ffruytlées^x past sauf with bitter *frúyt* of synne.

61, 185, 185.

Or what am *y* bet for *riche*^x *richésse* hepynge.

61, 185, 198.

Axe him *mercý*^x that is al *mérciable*^x.

61, 190, 335.

How seystow by *affrýcan*^x Scipion?

Áffrýcan^x clept, for that he *áffryk*^x wan.

72, 42, 1149, 1150.

Men selde him seen in-to wykkyd *deth*^x stert,

That pitous is; but thei han cruel *déth*

Often whos *crúelte*^x *crúélly*^x sleth.

72, 108, 3001 ff.

The following passage shows such decided tendency toward word-play of all kinds that I have ventured to allow initial inversion in one line, that being clearly the intention of the poet.

And géve and naght ^xfor-géve, it schal hym rewe:
 Where as oure werkès mostè ben avowed,
 The ⁽unmérciable schal be disallowed:
 Who naght *for-géveth*, *mércy* dooth he non:

And ^x*mércylés* man, *mércy* schal for-gon.

^x*Mércý*, crist caused *tó* ben incarnate,

And humbled hym ^x*tó* take oure bretherhede.

God ^x*in-mortél*, rewynge oure seek estate,

^x*Mórtel* be-cam, ^x*tó* purge oure synful dede.

72, 120, 3328 ff.

Venquyssheth was in batayle by ^x*pómpéye*,

.

And from ^x*hým* caste his dyademe aweye;

But ^x*pómpeyús*, as blyve, of his nobleye

Stirte unto ^x*hým*, and up ^x*hým* lifte & hente,

And many ⁽a word benigne on *hým* dispente.

72, 117, 3236 ff.

And lykerous; by ^x*mésure*, his talent

^x*Mesuré* he moot; whan ^x*résoun* is ^x*regént*

Of man, than ^x*régneth* no delicacie;

^x*Resoún*, a man defendeth fro folye.

72, 138, 3826 ff.

ffor none of tho two can ^x*conséile* ^xwel;

Hir reed & ^x*cónseil* is envenymouse.

72, 177, 4917, 4918.

And thogh *gold*^x werê graven ther-with-al,
 Naght myght it helpè : beth nat *gólde*^x thrál !
 72, 194, 5373, 5374.

To this class probably belongs the variation of accent upon prefixes and suffixes attached to different stems, of which variation the following lines are examples:

Oure *mýsease* & *mýschief*^x for to amende !
 72, xxxii, 11.

And do to *Bachus*^x and *Venús* homage ;⁴⁰
 ffor non of hem two can be wel from othir,
 Thei love as vel as doth *sustír* & *brothír*^x.
 72, 140, 3890 ff.

A most peculiar specimen of this sort of variation is the passage,

O Ioachim, a, *dérè fadír*^x myn,
 And thu seint anne, my *dére modíre* also.
 72, xxxviii, 57, 58.⁴¹

Occleve shows the usual weakness for the play on *man*, *men*, and *woman*, *women*, a weakness by no means confined to the Tradition. Occleve writes:

In which that *mán* & *wómman*^x fourmed were:
 Almyghty God to *wómman*^x shope swich grace,
 That she was formed in the worthier ;
 In paradys *men*^x wot wel he made here ;
 But *mán* ymade was out of paradys.
 72, 186, 5147 ff.

⁴⁰ Cf. Wyatt's line, with *Venus*^x and *Backús* all their lif longe, Anglia, xviii, 507, 23.

⁴¹ Cf. ll. 55, 56, cited in the third class.

Play with and without variation occurs: 72, 18, 468, 469; 47, 1280; 185, 5131; 18, 5141, 5142.

With this curious passage should be compared that of Puttenham (*The Arte of English Poesie*, Ed. Arber, p. 147), who quotes the "Oracle" and comments upon the speech,

"Your best way to worke, and marke my words well,
Not money; nor many,
Nor any, but any,
Not *weemen*, but *weemen* beare the bell.

And the subtiltie lay in the accent and Ortographie of these two words *any* and *weemen*; for *any* being devided, sounds a *nie* or neere person to the king; and *weemen* being divided sounds *wee men* and not *weemen*." (Cf. Wurth, *Wortspiel*, p. 210.)

The third class, simple iteration of the same word with variation of stress, includes the following examples:

Which that thy *fádir*^x heeld in reste & pees,
With title iust & trewe in al *his*^x age,
And *his*^x *fádir* before him brygelees.

61, 13, 162 ff.

Thow that for *mércy*^x deidest, change his thoght!
Benignē lord, enable *him* to *mércy*^x!

61, 17, 271, 272.

Shal thy *mércy*^x be lessē than *it*^x oghte?
May nat *thy*^x *mércy*^x, with my gilt dispense,

And pardon gete of *thát*^x *that*^x *it* mis wroghte?

61, 45, 62 ff.

And our *ladý*^x, the blissid mayden free,

My lord & *lady*^x have in governance!

61, 51, 65, 66.⁴²

That of his *mercy*^x thogh that I be nyce,
And negligent in keepyng of his lawe,

His hy *mercý*^x, my soule un-to him drawe.

Modir of *mercy*^x, wey of indulgence.

61, 52, 5 ff.

Nów, my freend, so *góod* geve yow *góod*^x chaunce,
Is it nat *góod* to make a purveance?

61, 120, 291, 292.

Yis^x, Thomas, *yís*, thow hast a good entente.

61, 120, 295.

He strypid *hír* anoon, left al delay,

Un-to *hír*^x smok, and heng *hír*^x by *hír*^x *héer*

Up-on an ook, and by *hír*^x, *hír* palfray

He stonde leet, and foorth on devel way

Rood *this* tirant *this*^x man malicious.

61, 148, 233 ff.

Állás^x, eternal god! o kyng of kynges,
Wher-to was y born, in this world to be;

O, *állás*^x, why in my nativitee.

61, 181, 101 ff.

But *hélp* is noon, *hélp*^x and confort been dede.

61, 182, 128.

There may no *mártirdám*^x me makè smerte

⁴² Cf. 72, 148, 4118, 4119.

So sore as this ^x*martírdam* ^x*smertith* me.

72, XXXVIII, 54, 55.⁴³

Wel may men calle or namè ^x*mé marrá*

Fro hennes forth; and so men may ^x*mé cálle*.

How schuld I longere bé ^x*called* ^x*Máriá*?

72, XLII, 183 ff.

Whan I knewe nat what ^x*póvert* was to sey.

Now is ^x*póvert* the glas and the merour
In whiche I se my *gód*, my sayour.

Or ^x*póvert* cam, wiste I nat what ^x*gód* was.

72, 26, 689 ff.

^x*ffáylyng*, fadir, myn annuite,

.

^x*ffáillynge* *góð*, me *faíle* wole also

Who no ^x*góð* hath, is fer his frendes fro.

72, 35, 953 ff.

Whoso ^x*moost* hath, he *móost* of *schál* answer;

On *dáy* ^x*schál* comè, sum men *schál* par chaunce

.

Whan the ^x*dáy* comth ^x*of* ire and *of* vengeance,
Than *schál* men see, how in this world, I gesse,

^x*Ríchesse* is ^x*póvert*, and ^x*póvert* ^x*richésse*.⁴⁴

72, 48, 1310 ff.

The ordres of ^x*prestehóde* and of wedlok

.

⁴³ Cf. II. 57, 58, cited in the second class.

⁴⁴ Initial inversion is clearly the poet's intention in this line.

Of *préste*^x*hode* is, as it is resonabil.

72, 54, 1478, 1481.

Deth, by thi *déth*, hath harme irreparable.⁴⁵

72, 76, 2082.

That, syn ther werè *Rómayns*^x in cartage

In prisoun, and *Rómáyns*^x hadde eek in cage
Cartagiens, suffre hem at largè goo,

And the *Rómayns*^x go schulden also.

72, 82, 2258 ff.

Lawèful *iústice*^x is, as in manere,

Al *vértu*^x; and who wole han this *iústice*^x,

.

ffulfillè lawè, is *vértu*^x perfytt,

And *in-justice*^x is of al *vértu*^x qwyt.

72, 91, 2500 ff.

And, for *soth*^x sawès ben to lordes lothe,

Noght wol he *sóth* seyn, he hath made his oth.

72, 106, 2946, 2947.

Yee, *yée*, man, *yée*! we graunt it al and summe.

72, 108, 2979.

Twix vertuuous *plésaúnce*^x and flaterie:

Good *plésaúnce*^x is of swich benevolence

.

He *préysith*^x it, and rebukith folye;

But favel taketh al on othir parte;

⁴⁵ Cf. 72, XLIII, 214, cited earlier in this chapter; a more striking example.

In wrong ^x*preysýng* is al his craft and arte.
72, 111, 3082 ff.

The gylty man is no ^x*wróng* *dóon* unto,
But *wróng* is *dóon* unto thise othir two.
72, 115, 3177, 3178.

^x*Píte*e schal soul of man to god presente,⁴⁶
And god, that yaf us ensample of ^x*píte*e,
To ^x*pítous* folk savacioun schal be.
72, 115, 3197 ff.

Of Iulius ^x*Césár* ther was a knyght,
Whiche, with an hye voys, for to save his heed,
To his lord ^x*Césár* cryde a-lowdè ryght.
72, 118, 3271-3273.

Out of ^x*píte*e, growith ^x*mercý* and springith
ffor ^x*píteel*es man can do no ^x*mercý*
What prince hem lakkith, naght aright he kyngeth,
.
To ^x*píte*e, ^x*mercý* ioynè now wole I.
72, 119, 3305 ff.

Whethir supposist thou bet, that ^x*nobl*esse
Begynne in me, or ^x*nóbl*esse and honour
Deffaile in the?
72, 127, 3523, 3524.

But of myne helply ^x*lady* sovereyne
Largessè, my ^x*lady*, now wil I ryme.
72, 148, 4118, 4119.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Another obviously intended initial inversion.

⁴⁷ Cf. 61, 51, 65, 66.

A phrase that seems to have taken the fancy of Occleve is *ffoole largesse*; the combination he uses in a number of ways, including punning. This word-play is marked in *The Regement of Princes*, appearing in stanzas 630, 631, 654, 655, 656, 658, 661, 662. The variation is not always present, but seems to be intended in the following passages:

And, as I sayde, so may *fóol* ^x*lârgesse*.
^x*ffool* ^x*lârgesse* is a sekénesse curable,
 Outhir of indigence, othir elles age;
 He that *fóol* *lârgé* in youthe ^x*is*, *is* ^x*ful* able.
 72, 165, 4578 ff.

As gevè, but what man that is *fóol* ^x*lârgé*

 Twixt *fóol* ^x*lârgesse* and liberalitee,
 Sauf the *fóol* ^x*lârgé* of his imprudence.
 72, 166, 4619 ff.

Of his ^x*goode* gevè yow a *góode* substaunce,
 Swich oon cherich, and elles god forbede,
 Konneth hym thank of his ^x*goode* chevesaunce.
 72, 177, 4909 ff.

The ^x*ýmages* that in the chirche been,
 Maken folk thenke on god & on his seyntes,
 Whan the ^x*ýmages* thei be-holden & seen.
 72, 180, 4999 ff.

Uppon my maistres soulè, ^x*mércý* have,
 ffor him, lady, eke thi ^x*mércý* I crave.
 72, 181, 5011, 5012.

Whan thei him drough to ^x*prófyte* singular,

And of *profýt*^x commun nat weren cheer.

72, 189, 5249, 5250.

Thi^x *sélf* manaseth *thi*^x *sélf* for to dye.

Thi^x *sélf* destroye, and feble is thi victorie

Thow hast in *thi*^x *sélf* stryven oft or nowe.

72, 191, 5292 ff.

Of *góld* his *trésor*^x, but *góld*^x makith now

Trésor^x of him, as ye be-holdé may.

72, 193, 5357, 5358.

If thei wole have *pées*^x, *pées* perpetual.

72, 194, 5389.

The surprising frequency of the variation in Oocleve indicates that with him it is a distinct mannerism, and one is, perhaps, justified in calling him the "Donne of the Fifteenth Century." Wherever Oocleve learned the trick, perhaps from his master Chaucer, he unquestionably acquired a decided liking for it, and seems to have surpassed his fellows in its use.

Hawes.

Hawes does not equal Oocleve in the frequent use of the variation, but the *Pastime of Pleasure* furnishes some interesting examples. In the following lists the citations are made by page and line from the edition of the *Pastime* in the publications of the Percy Society, Vol. xviii, 1846.

Hawes illustrates the first class of the variation on a large scale. In addition to several passages showing the usual method of variation in *Anaphora* and other formulas, the following striking instances occur:

On pp. 100, 101, 102 appear five stanzas showing *Anaphora*. The first two are built on the formulas:

(a) Where that is *mésure*^x (p. 100, 6 lines).

(b) Where lacketh *mésure*^x (p. 101, 7 lines).

Two stanzas intervene. In the first appear the lines,

Without *mésure*^x can kepe his dignite.
101, 9.

Mésure^x is moderate to all bounte.
101, 12.

In the second stanza, the lines,

Who loveth *mésure*^x can not do amys.
101, 15.

Mésure^x also doth well exemplefy.
101, 20.

Now follows an entire stanza built on the formula,

Withóut^x *mésure*^x *wó*^x *wóρθ*^x *thé*^x
101, 22 ff.

This runs through six lines, and the stanza closes,

And *without*^x *mésure*^x *wó*^x *wóρθ*^x *thé*^x gladnes,
101, 28.

in which the accent is changed for every word in the formula. Thus the principle of arsis-thesis variation is employed on a large scale. But Hawes is not satisfied with this attempt, and in the next two stanzas he surpasses himself:

Mésure^x *mésuring*^x *mésurably*^x taketh;
Measure measuring *mésuratly*^x dooth all;
Measure measuring *mésuratly*^x maketh;
Measure measuring *mésuratly*^x guyde shall;
Measure measuring *mésuratly*^x doth call;

^x*Mesúre* ^x*mesúring* to right hye ^x*preemyence*,
For alway *mésure* is grounde of excellence.

102, 1 ff.

On pp. 153, 154, occurs a similar case of the variation on a large scale. Here the formula ^x*Wó wóρθ* is varied by ^x*Wó worth*. Cf. ll. 27, 28, p. 153:

^x*Wó wóρθ* the flour that can do no bote

^x*Wó wóρθ* you that perst him at the route.

Similar variation occurs on p. 154, the third stanza being a good example. The stanza with *Anaphora* on p. 215 seems to show no arsis-thesis variation. Other examples of the variation are as follows:

For ^x*nátúre* ^x*náturynge* ^x*nátúre* made all.

106, 12.

Theyr sentence is ^x*cónnyng*, as ^x*appereth* well,

Fór by ^x*cónning* theyr arte doth engéndre,

And wythout ^x*cónnyng* we knowe ^x*never* a dele,

Óf theyr sentence but may sone *surréndre*.

39, 22 ff.

Her *thóught* I knewe not, ^x*shé thought* as ^x*she* lyst.

59, 19.

Wyth many other *fáyre* ladyes also,

But so ^x*fáyre* as she I ^x*never* sawe no mo.

60, 6, 7.

Where lacketh ^x*músyke* there is no pleynte;

For ^x*músyke* is concorde and also peace,

Nothing without ^x*músýke* may well encrease.

61, 26 ff.

A mynute *síx* ^x*houres*, and *síx* ^x*houres* a yere.⁴⁸
63, 25.

An interesting indication of the poet's consciousness of the variation is offered by the two readings of the same proverb:

Who *spáreth* ^x*tó* *speke* ^xhe *spáréth* ^x*tó* *spéde*.
74, 8.

Who spareth to speke he to spede doth spare.
91, 13.

The first has been transferred bodily from the vernacular into the line, with unmistakable play of accent. When the poet uses it later, he gives it a more formal style, and eliminates the variation of stress.

I called *Counséyle*, and *prayed* hym to awake
To gyve me *counseyle* ^xwhat were best to take.
75, 6, 7.

By Flora *coulóured* ^xwyth *colóurs* ^xsundry.
79, 7.

Unháp ^xand *háppy*, ^xupon you doth growe:
Yf that you call me unto your mercy
Of all *háppy* ^xthe most *háppy*, ^xI trow.
82, 16 ff.

Wherefore of *right* I pray you to remembre
All that I *wrytè* ^x⁴⁹ unto you *right* ^xnow.
154, 22, 23.

Theyr *bódyes* ^xbete that theyr *bodýés* ^xhad marde.
160, 9.

⁴⁸ The text has "vi"; I spell for the sake of clearness.

⁴⁹ The two words were not, of course, pronounced exactly alike in Hawes's time; but there was enough similarity of sound to utilize them for punning and for arsis-thesis variation.

As a final example, may be cited the play on the words *virgin*, *sone*, and the several forms on the stem *nature*, all in the second and third stanzas on p. 216.

7. *Arsis-Thesis Variation after The Tradition.*

The vogue of arsis-thesis variation seems to find less favor after Wyatt, who shows a decided tendency toward it, a tendency no doubt derived from knowledge of the verse of the Tradition.⁵⁰ After Wyatt the poets still display a fondness for iteration, but the variation is much less used. This is just what ought to be expected. With Wyatt a new set of ideas entered English poetry, and, although much of the old artificiality was retained, it was gradually subordinated to the more important matter of content. What to say now concerned the poet more than how to say it. Invigoration of thought brought with it freedom from tradition and artifice. Under the new canon, iteration was to some extent reduced to its primitive function of intensification, or utilized rather for rhetorical effect, as in simple word-play or punning.

Nevertheless, the old variation still held on in many quarters. It is, for example, prevalent, though almost obscured by simple repetition, in the intensely artificial and conceited school of Scottish poets that flourished in the sixteenth century. Here it owes its preservation, no doubt, to the predilection of the Scot for alliteration, aided and abetted by the influence of the French rhétoriquers. Douglas's *Palice of Honour*, finished in 1501, furnishes examples of the variation, of which the following line is an instance:

Wo^x wó^{rth} Cupyd and wó^x wó^{rth} fals Venus.

Stanza LVI.

The frequent use of simple repetition, however, leads one to the conclusion that such cases are accidental. Initial inversion

⁵⁰ Cf. Chapter v for examples. Melton thinks Donne took his idea of arsis-thesis variation from Wyatt. Cf. Melton, *Donne*, p. 188 ff.

might, too, explain away our example. Dunbar (1460-1513) seems to feel the aesthetic effect in a good many lines. *The Thistle and the Rose* offers an excellent example:

^x*Haill* May, ^x*haill* Flora, *haill* Aurora schene,

^x*Haill* princes natur, *haill* Venus luvis quene.

ll. 62, 63.

Other examples from the same pen are:

Bot *lúve* the *lúve* that did for his ^x*lufe* de.

Merle and Nightingale, l. 103.

Now *fáyre* ^x*fayrést* off every *fáyre*.

Now Fayre Fayrest, l. 1.

Alexander Scott's verses offer some convincing examples.⁵¹ His *Haif Hairt in Hairt* is a remarkable specimen of alliteration and repetition. The word *hairt* is tossed about continually, and such lines as these appear:

Lat nat deir *háirt* my leill *hairt* be forloir.

l. 6.

Gif my ^x*háirt* be your *háirtis* s^xvitire

How may ye thoill your treu ^x*háirt* be overthrowin

Quhairfoir sweet *háirt* not suffer so be knowin.

l. 17, 18, 19.

Scott's ordinary use of repetition, however, does not indicate any feeling for the subtler artifice. His customary method is shown at its best (or worst!) in *Ane New Yeir Gift to Quene Mary* (1562). The *Envoy* and *Lectori* at the close represent the apotheosis of repetition and alliteration. Typical lines are these:

⁵¹ The complete works of Alexander Scott (1545?-1568?) have been published by The Scottish Text Society, 1896; and by The Early English Text Society, Extra Series 85. Scott must have known Wyatt's work. Cf. *MLN.* xxii, 1, 32.

Prudent maist gent tak tent and prent the wordis
Intill this bill with will thame still to face.

ll. 208, 209.

Fresch fulgent flurist fragrant flour formois.

l. 217.

It will be noted that in all the long poem, with sound, syllable, and word in constant iteration, there is no trace of arsis-thesis variation. This fact indicates the decline of the vogue after Wyatt.

English examples of repetition at a little later date are equally as elaborate and almost as free from the variation. Barnfield's *Hellen's Rape* is a typical example.⁵² The first stanza is characteristic, and illustrates the method of simple iteration.

Lovely a Lasse so loved a Lasse and alas such a loving
Lasse for a while but a while was none such a sweet bonny
Love-Lasse

As Helen, Maenelaus loving lov'd lovelie a love lasse
Till spightfull Fortune from a love-lasse made her a love-
lesse

Wife, etc., *ad nauseam usque*.

The Elizabethans delighted in the artifice of repetition, and even Shakespeare, as we have seen, used arsis-thesis variation consciously; but its frequency is as nothing compared to the mass of examples of simple iteration for emphasis or word-play. Puttenham, in *The Arte of English Poesie* (1584-1588), sums up the various methods of repetition in his Chapter XIX, *Of Figures sententious otherwise called Rhetoricall*. Here are tabulated over forty ways of repeating the word or phrase. In some arsis-thesis variation is inevitable, but its presence is

⁵² Barnfield's poems were written 1594-1598 and are reprinted in Arber's *English Scholar's Library*, No. 14 (1882). John Donne (1573-1631) is, perhaps, more likely to have been influenced by the extravagances of this verse than by the more artistic use of the same devices in *Tottel's Miscellany* (1557). Cf. Melton's *Donne*, p. 188.

obscured by the more obvious effect of iteration. Puttenham's own criticism of some of the methods might easily be applied to most of them: "These repetitions . . . be to no purpose, for neither can ye say that it urges affection, nor that it beautifieth or enforceth the sense, nor hath any other subtiltie in it. and therefore is a very foolish impertineney of speech, and not a figure."

Wurth's 250 pages of Shakespeare's uses of *wortspiel*⁵³ show extremely few cases of arsis-thesis variation. Shakespeare uses word-play primarily for emphasis, and the repeated word usually gets a heavy stress. Nevertheless, remarkable examples of the variation appear. The following should be added to those cited early in the chapter:

^x
Thou makest the vestal violate her oath;

^x
Thou blow'st the fire when temperance is thaw'd;

^x ^x
Thou smother'st honesty, thou murder'st troth;

^x
Thou foul abettor! ^xthou notorious bawd!

^x
Thou plantest scandal and displacest laud.

^x ^x
Thou ravisher, thou traitor, thou false thief.

Lucrece, 883 ff.

^x
Such *sense*, that my ^x*sense* breeds with it.

Measure, II, 2, 142.

^x
Death, *déath*.—O amiable lovely *deáth*!

King John, III, 4, 25.

^x ^x
It is *thyselſ*, mine *own self's* better part,

^x ^x
Mine eye's clear eye, my *déar heart's déarer héart*.

Com. Er. III, 2, 61, 62.

⁵³ Leopold Wurth, *Das Wortspiel bei Shakspere*, Wiener Beiträge zur englischen Philologie, I. Bd., Wien u. Leipzig, 1895.

For wisdom's sake, a word that all ^x*mén* *lóve*,
 Or for ^x*love's* sake, a word that *lóves* all *mén*,
 Or for ^x*mén's* sake, the authors of these *wómen*,
 Or *wómen's* sake, by whom *wé* ^x*mén* are *mén*.⁵⁴
LLL IV, 3, 357 ff.

Or *tén* ^x*times* happier, be it *tén* for one;
Tén ^x*times* thyself were happier than thou art,
 If *tén* of thine ^x*ten times* refigured thee.
Son. VI, 8-10.

Other Elizabethans seem to know the variation, but they reduce it to absurdity. Thus Marston writes:

I am *lóvesicke* for your *lóve*; ^x*love*, *lóve*, for *lóving*.
The Insatiate Countesse, III.
^x*Love* is not *lóve* unlesse ^x*love* doth persévere;
 That *lóve* is perfect *lóve* that *lóves* for ever.
Ibid., III.

He reaches the climax of absurdity in two lines wherein every word, except *hurry*, in the first line changes its accent in the second, and there is ample cause to suppose the suffix in the third line to be juggled with.

Fly, call, run, rowe, ride, cry, shout, hurry, haste;
 Haste, hurry, shoute, cry, ride, rowe, run, call, fly,
 Backward and forward every way about.
Antonio and Mellida, III.

Milton's line,

^x*Weep* *nó* ^x*more*, woeful shepherds, *wéep* ^x*nó* *móre*,
Lycidas, 165.

⁵⁴ Cf. Occleve and Puttenham.

indicates that the poet was not deaf to the delicate harmony of changing accents. This line and the similar

^x*Sigh* ^x*nó* ^x*more*, ladies, *sígh* ^x*nó* *móre*.

.

^x*Sing* ^x*nó* ^x*more* ditties, *síng* ^x*nó* *móe*.

Much Ado, II, 3, 64 ff.

evidently go back to a ruder source in the poetry of the folk.

The so-called *Friar of Orders Grey*, a ballad of twenty-eight stanzas in Percy's *Reliques*, made up of fragments of old songs scattered through the plays of Shakespeare and Fletcher, contains the line from *Much Ado* and also the line quoted as the possible source of Milton's line. The original verse is found in John Fletcher's *Queen of Corinth*, III, 2. Cf. Child's *English and Scottish Ballads*, v, 201; Percy's *Reliques*, I, 225 [Reprinted in *Englische Sprach und Litteraturdenkmale*, Ed. Vollmöller, Heilbronn, 1889, Vol. I, p. 174 ff.] Gummere, who cites the lines as examples of iteration possibly varied by accent (Cf. *Beginnings of Poetry*, p. 210), makes no mention of their source. Rushton (*Shakespeare Illustrated by Old Authors*, Herrig's *Archiv* 39, p. 267.) illustrates the line from *Much Ado* by a quotation from Aristophanes's *Birds*, and makes no reference to their origin in the ballad.

The difference between Milton's line and its probable original,

Weep no more lady, weep no more,

is apparent. The earlier versifier may have had mere repetition in mind; Milton's addition of a third alliterating syllable between the other two, with the consequent transference of the line from the informal short line to the grave decasyllable with its measured beats, indicates the poet's appreciation of the aesthetic value of the iteration.

Further tracing of the variation is unnecessary. It appears

sporadically almost everywhere in English verse,⁵⁵ and once, in Donne's poetry, it becomes a mannerism and one of the most marked characteristics of the versification. Most important for our study is the fact that in the time of the Chaucerian Tradition arsis-thesis variation, surely inherited from Chaucer himself, was well known and often used. This fact alone strengthens the position, taken in Chapter III, that the system of accentuation, far from being formless and spasmodic, based itself uncompromisingly upon a strictly regular scansion. Again, it offers fresh evidence of the artistic use of secondary accent from the earliest monuments of English verse to the present day. Lastly, it supports the doctrine of verse-rhetoric by offering another reason for making a difference between prose-usage and that of verse, and by furnishing still another method of aesthetic differentiation.

⁵⁵ An interesting example occurs in Arnold's *Sohrab and Rustum*, 402-404:—

—then Sohrab threw

In turn and full struck Rustum's shield; ^x*shárp ráng*,

The iron plates ^x*ráng shárp*, but turn'd the spear.

CHAPTER V.

SIR THOMAS WYATT.

I. WYATT AND THE CHAUCERIAN TRADITION.

Sir Thomas Wyatt enjoys the peculiar distinction of standing at the threshold of a new era in English verse and, at the same time, looking back toward the traditions of an obsolete and outworn prosody. It is the first rather than the last position that is emphasized in all our works on English literature. Much is said of Wyatt as the English pioneer of the literary Renaissance; as the father of a new prosody; as the reformer of English versification. Little mention is made of his points of contact with the medieval system to which he was the natural heir, except to cite it as the load that burdened his flight. Yet Wyatt is as truly a member of the school of The Tradition as he is the founder of the Italian school.

It becomes clear to the student of the verse of the Tradition that Wyatt never gets very far from that verse in the mechanical facts of syllabification, accentuation, and rime. In these three respects he can claim some superiority over Lydgate, Ockleve, and Hawes; but the essential principles of versification are the same in all cases, and the differences in detail are, in the decasyllable certainly, not marked enough to separate Wyatt sharply from his less artistic predecessors. In the short line, however, he is easily and incomparably their superior. Wyatt's claim to distinction, nevertheless, would have an insecure foundation did it rest upon metrical merit of the individual line. It is skill in stanzaic structure and freshness and vigor of thought that place him high above the poets of the Chaucerian Tradition. Yet he belongs, too, in large measure, to that Tradition, and it is with this feature of his work that we are now concerned.

The foregoing chapters have made it unnecessary to lay down here the essential principles of the verse of the Tradition. It remains for this chapter to point out and to emphasize Wyatt's use of those principles, and thus to affirm him to be as truly the last of the Chaucerians as he undoubtedly is the first of the new school. In syllabification, in accentuation, and in his use of arsis-thesis variation, Wyatt is firmly linked to the older system, and these three features must now be considered separately.

It is without the province of this treatise to consider the question of rime, important as that may be to the metrist. Suffice it to say that in this respect Wyatt and the Chaucerians show all the peculiarities of Chaucer and of earlier English metrical verse.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary to restate here the well known fact that the only reliable text of Wyatt now available is Flügel's transcript in *Anglia*. (xviii, 263 ff., 455 ff.; xix, 175 ff., 413 ff.) Nott attempted a complete edition of Wyatt, but he included all the work accredited to the poet, and modernized the spelling to such an extent as to make accurate metrical study impossible. The Egerton ms. 2711 (Nott's Harington ms. No. 1) is the only true basis for work upon Wyatt's metre, and all my readings are from Flügel's transcript of it. All previous investigation, as far as I know, has been based upon the "doctored" texts of *Tottel's Miscellany* and of Dr. Nott.

II. WYATT AND SYLLABIC ARTICULATION.

Little need be said of the syllabic articulation of Wyatt's line. Chapter II made it plain that the syllabic ideal of Chaucer was quite different from the ideal of rigidity that characterizes Romance verse, and that it was based largely upon the Anglo-Saxon principle of resolved stresses. It has been emphasized, too, that the poets of the Tradition exaggerated this syllabic liberty, but that their free line represents, not chaos, but a misconception of Chaucer's line; not a break-down, or even the tendency toward a break-down, into tumbling verse,

but a lack of artistic feeling, resulting in an abuse of entirely legitimate metrical devices.

Of Wyatt it may be said, briefly, that he returns to some extent to the Chaucerian use of resolution, but, like the Chaucerians, does not always observe the temperance of the Master. That he was strongly influenced by the free line of the Tradition is obvious to the most superficial reader. That he improved upon it, without rejecting altogether even its ugliest syllabic features, is equally apparent. Alscher's elaborate study of Wyatt's versification,¹ although founded upon much modernized texts, makes another catalogue of his syllabic phenomena unnecessary. Used in connection with our chapter on the syllabic articulation of the Tradition, it furnishes a fair statement of the freedom of Wyatt's line. It should be kept in mind, however, that the genuine text of Wyatt in the Egerton ms. indicates a much more frequent use of resolved stresses than is indicated by the text of *Tottel's Miscellany*.

In one important respect, however, Alscher, like most other metrists, goes far astray; this is in regard to Wyatt's use of final *e*. As a matter of the greatest importance to English metric, this subject must be carefully investigated.

Wyatt's Use of Final *e*.

To prove that Wyatt made extensive use of the final *e* is to throw light upon one of the most disputed problems of English prosody, and to redeem much of the verse of the Tradition from the ignominy into which it has been cast by most students of English metric. I feel justified, then, in treating the matter at some length.

Ellis's dictum is no doubt responsible for the fate of the *e*

¹ Rudolf Alscher, *Sir Thomas Wyatt und seine Stellung in der Entwicklungsgeschichte der englischen Literatur und Verskunst*. [Wiener Beiträge zur deutschen und englischen Philologie, I.] Wien, 1886. Cf. ten Brink's rather severe criticism of the monograph, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, January, 1887, Col. 12.

at the hands of subsequent writers. That dictum, based upon uncritical texts and carelessly written manuscripts, but accepted without question in most cases, runs as follows:

“Final *e* in the sixteenth century was retained in writing but had absolutely ceased to have any sound and had come to be regarded mainly as an orthoepical sound for indicating the length of the next preceding vowel, unless it was itself preceded by a double consonant. How soon this final *e* was lost it is impossible to say, but great irregularities already occur in the Thornton ms. of Lincoln about the middle of the fifteenth century. Hence it will be safest to omit it altogether in reading works of that and later periods.”²

Students of Wyatt's verse have found that this rule has its exceptions; but even these metrists are chary in hazarding a positive opinion. Thus Alscher says (p. 94);

“Wie steht es um das auch im jetzigen Englisch noch in ziemlich zahlreichen Fällen vorhandene, zu Wyatts Zeit aber noch viel öfter vorkommende *e* am Ende verschiedener Wörter, welches bald einen organischen, bald einen unorganischen Ursprung hat? Als Gesetz gilt, dass Wyatt dieses End-*e* nur in der Schrift bewahrt, was uns Tottels Druck zeigt, ohne ihm den Wert einer die Senkung ausfüllenden Silbe zuzuweisen. Dies wird durch folgende aus T. M. entnommene Beispiele bewiesen: Wie aber Schipper in seiner *Altenglischen Metrik* beweisende Stellen für das Tönen eines solchen End-*e* bei Barelay (p. 503) und bei Lyndesay (p. 523) beigebracht hat, so lässt sich trotz jenes Hauptgesetzes auch aus Wyatt eine oder die andere Stelle anführen, welche diese, bei ihm freilich schon ausserordentlichen seltene Erscheinung belegt.”

Alscher's opinion, however, is of little real value, because Alscher used by preference the much modernized text of *Tottel's Miscellany*, and seldom went even to Nott, who at least approximates the manuscript reading.

The same objection may be made to the judgment of

² A. J. Ellis, *Early English Pronunciation*, Part I, p. 405.

Schipper, *Metrik* II, 93 ff. The few examples furnished there are based upon the "doctored" texts of Tottel and Nott, and one of the instances forces an *e* where it is not really needed, in order to avoid one of those omnipresent and quite obvious accents of the verse of the period that are so distasteful to Schipper.

Saintsbury is the latest scholar to give grudgingly to Wyatt the precious syllabic *e*. The presentation is characteristic, and runs as follows:

"There is, moreover, still an occasional tendency to use the final *e* (which has evidently been quite discarded as a staff) as a crutch to help a lame line out."³

With the manuscript reading recently made accessible in Flügel's transcript, accurate knowledge is now possible. The list of examples that follows shows that Wyatt unquestionably uses the *e* and uses it many times, both when it is final, organic or inorganic, and when it is epenthetic. It is clear, too, that he uses it customarily not as a "crutch," nor even as a "staff," but, to carry out Mr. Saintsbury's suggestive figure, as a gold-headed cane; in short, for ornament. Wyatt had no idea of using his *e* with philological accuracy. To him it was an archaism, an obsolete syllable that could be used to prevent the clashing together of heavy stresses. As such a "buffer," it is used in many instances; an archaic form preserved for definite artistic purposes.

There is nothing new or remarkable in this method. Lydgate found the *e* useful in preserving the rhythm of his line.⁴ Hawes used it for the same purpose.⁵ Ellis remarks upon Chaucer's artistic employment of the already archaic letter, and regrets that the feeling for its use has completely died out among Englishmen.⁶ Wyatt, then, may be granted the boon of the *e*, not as a fault but as a beauty.

³ Saintsbury, *English Prosody* I, p. 305 ff.

⁴ Cf. Schick, EETS. Ext. Ser. 60, LXIII; Sieper, EETS. Ext. Ser. 89, p. 18, note.

⁵ Cf. Chapter II.

⁶ Cf. *Early English Pronunciation*, Part I, p. 324.

The following examples are strictly confined to the poems in the Egerton ms., that being the only reliable text. Reference is made to Flügel's transcript in *Anglia* by volume, page, and line, and in page-order, without attempt at any other classification.

Examples of Final e.

- the mynde hideth, co'lo^r contrary. xviii, 273, 10.
- She that mee lerns too lovè, & suffre. xviii, 274, 5.
- and wyldè for to holde : though I seme tame. xviii, 276, 14.
- in bitternes have my blynde lyfè taisted.⁷ xviii, 277, 2.
- always whetting my youthèly desyre. xviii, 278, 34.
- In yongè age, I toke him from that art. xviii, 280, 75.
- and Hannyball, to Rome so trobèlous. xviii, 281, 86.
- Of right goode seedè ill fruyte I gather. xviii, 281, 109.
- may còntent you : withoutè doying greiffe. xviii, 284, 10.
- but you that blamè this dyversnes moost.⁸ xviii, 285, 9.
- and hopè still & nothing hase. xviii, 457, 10.
- and eke the samè right joyus. xviii, 459, 5.

⁷ The rime is *taisted: traced: araced*, the first two being pronounced as monosyllables.

⁸ *Tottel's Miscellany* has *blamen*.

- thorough sharpē sees in wynter nyght^{es} doeth pas.
xviii, 464, 2.
- of suche a rotē cometh ffryte fruytles.
xviii, 465, 14.
- do torment me so that I very often
ēvy them beyondē all mesure.⁹
xviii, 467, 4.
- for it is timē withoute any fable.¹⁰
xviii, 470, 3.
- It was no dremē I lay brodē waking.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
.
into a straungē fasshion of forsaking.
xviii, 472, 15.
- with faith to takē part.
xviii, 477, 12.
- then of releseē for to trete.
xviii, 491, 27.
- the furyous gonnē in his raging yre.¹¹
xviii, 492.
- then should I nedē no more mone.
xviii, 496, 8.^b
- of oon slain owte right.
xviii, 504, 19.
- I can not speake and lokē like a saynt.
xviii, 508, 31.
- To make the Crowē singing as the Swanne.
xviii, 508, 44.
- had not I senē such a beest before.
xviii, 514, 56.
- Sergeaunt with macē hawbert sword nor knyff.
xviii, 515, 78.

⁹ This line illustrates the Chaucerian method of direct attack with enjambement. Cf. Chapter II.

¹⁰ The rime is *fāble: sādell: stāble: sāble: enāble*.

¹¹ Cf. Flügel's note on this line.

a lyvè & not torn to clay.

XIX, 175, 14.

nought helpeth tymè humblenes nor place.

XIX, 179, 24.

as pandare was in suche a likè dede.

XIX, 183, 75.

as chauncè by the dise.

XIX, 189, 21.

the time is longè that doth sitt.

XIX, 192, 38.

To hast to slake my passè lesse or more.

XIX, 202, 5.

my derkè panges off cloudy thowghtes as bryght as
phebus sphere.

XIX, 204, 40.

chastysè me not for my deserving.

XIX, 422, 9.

Of thy great namè, ground of all glory.

XIX, 424, 61.

y^t erst did make his faultè for to tremble.¹²

XIX, 426, 18.

w'towte the samè but by the goodnes.

XIX, 427, 5.

by dayly ragè rorynge in excesse.

XIX, 427, 28.

unto the lordè all my synfull plyght.

XIX, 428, 39.

This while a bemè that bryght sonne forth send^{es}

XIX, 429, 17.

his hand his tunè his mynd sowght his lay.

XIX, 430, 31.

like as he whom his ownè thought affrays.

XIX, 433, 26.

¹² The rime is *tremble*: *resemble*: *assemble*.^x The apparent defectiveness of l. 22 is due to the contracted form *thebrews*, which must be read as a trisyllable. Cf. Chap. II.

Lord here my prayre and let me crye passe.

XIX, 437, 1.

thes gretè thing^{es} y^t greter spryt compild.

XIX, 439, 4.

III. WYATT'S ACCENTUATION.

In Chapter III the peculiar accentuation of the verse of the Tradition was ascribed to an attempt on the part of the poets to measure up to the two-fold psychological demand of the decasyllable: that of structure and that of formal or emotional content. It was then pointed out that the scansion of the period was for the decasyllable formal, measured, dignified, with constant use of secondary accent and the emphasis of the articulative elements of the line. These phenomena were attributed to artistic purpose on the part of the versifiers, and it was argued that they constituted admirable differentiae between the usages of prose and of poetry. It was further shown that similar conditions prevail to-day in the decasyllable. Again, it was developed that the decasyllable, because of its peculiar structure and accentuation, is especially adapted to grave and formal verse, and that it was and is so employed.

On the other hand, the octosyllable was characterized as informal in both tone and function, and relatively prosaic in accentuation; this greater flexibility was ascribed, as in the case of the long line, to ultimately psychological causes. Further, it was developed that the octosyllable, because of the ease and the prosaic character of its structure and accentuation, is peculiarly adapted to light and informal verse, and that it was and is so employed.

The organic use of the two lines was thus treated, and it was emphasized that the Chaucerians had a much keener sense than is usually supposed of the structure and proper function of the two lines, and that they show a careful discrimination in the choice of the line for treating formal and informal topics respectively.

All this may be said with emphasis of Wyatt; and, after the full discussion in Chapter III, an elaborate statement of his method of applying the principle there advanced is altogether unnecessary. It is enough to assert that Wyatt's use of long and short lines is altogether organic, and that the two in his hands display the same features that characterize them throughout the Tradition and even to-day; further, that these phenomena are due to essential differences in structure and content.

This, I am convinced, is the true explanation of Wyatt's so-called "capricious if not altogether antinomian accentuation"; of that "perpetual stumbling and tumbling yet picking himself up again and pressing on towards the goal"¹³ which modern metrists find so disagreeable. It is the exaggeration of the "grand style" that gives this effect.

It is necessary only to observe where this method is most noticeable to find confirmation of the theory that the grave and formal, approximating the emotional, style was thus expressed by the Chaucerians and by Wyatt. It is the Psalms and the Sonnets of Wyatt that display these features at their greatest frequency. The verse in lighter and more lyric mood is almost invariably free from any peculiar or difficult accentuation, and approximates, even reaches in many cases, an entirely modern scheme of rhythm and accent. Statistics are unnecessary here, for the most superficial reader of Wyatt knows that these facts are true. Difficulty of translation, unfamiliarity with the decasyllable, the influence of the older verse,—all these reasons have been advanced to explain this obvious differentiation. None are adequate. The lighter pieces with prose accentuation and easy rhythm are frequently translations; the decasyllable had been used without cessation since Chaucer; the older verse undoubtedly exerted some influence, but why should it be felt most strongly in the Psalms, which are at once the latest and the most dignified of all Wyatt's works?

¹³ Cf. Saintsbury, *History English Prosody* I, 305.

One explanation, then, remains: that Wyatt in his serious and formal moods followed the method of the lofty and "hovering" style that he had inherited from the Chaucerians, and in his lighter and more lyric moods naturally fell into the easy, prosaic accentuation that belongs to a verse wherein no peculiarity of structure or content demands differentiation from the tones of everyday speech. This, I am convinced, is the true statement of the case.

IV. ARSIS-THESIS VARIATION.

Wyatt's use of arsis-thesis variation is indicative both of his study and his knowledge of the Chaucerians and of the method of regular and formal scansion that he inherited from them. With Wyatt the variation is not, as it is with Occleve, a decided mannerism; but his use of it is frequent enough to justify us in characterizing it as one of the features of his style.

The question of the source of the variation has been answered already in the chapter devoted to the study of that phenomenon. I think we are safe in assuming that Wyatt learned the trick from the verse of the Chaucerian Tradition, and I am inclined to name Occleve as the chief influence. Wyatt's foreign models of versification, his French and Italian masters, may have taught him something here; but the fine showing already in English verse militates somewhat against that theory.

The poet's constant use of simple iteration¹⁴ indicates his fondness for that means of verse-ornament; and I take this as additional proof, if any be needed, of his consciousness of the variation when that feature does occur. Frequently the play of accents comes in a long passage of simple iteration;¹⁵ this is significant: the phenomenon is a definite artistic device for relief and variety. The following examples will, however,

¹⁴ Cf. *Anglia* XVIII, 484, 494, 496, 497, etc.

¹⁵ Cf. *Anglia* XIX, 438, 43 ff.; 441, 44 ff.

put beyond question the existence of arsis-thesis variation in Wyatt's verse.¹⁶

Examples of Arsis-Thesis Variation.

What vailleth trouth? or, by it, *tóo* take payne?

Tóo ^xstryve, by stedfastnes, for *tóo* attayne,

Tóo ^xbe just, & true: & free from dowblenes.

xviii, 272, 1 ff.

Withóute ^x*Iyen* ^x*Í* se: & *withóute* ^xtong *Í* ^xplain

Í ^xdesire to perisshe: and yet *Í* aske helthe

Í ^xlove an othr: and thus *Í* ^xhate my self

Í ^xfede me in sorowe & laughe in all my pain.

xviii, 463, 9 ff.

Súche ^xare the dyvers throws

Súche that no man knows

.

Súche ^xare the raging woos.

xix, 188, 25 ff.

sum ^xdo present to my weping yes lo

.

sum ^xother offer to my remembrans

those pleasant word^{es} now bitter to my mynd

and *súm* shew me the powre of my armor.

xix, 424, 84 ff.

¹⁶ Reference is made to volume, page, and line of *Anglia*, and the examples are grouped in the three classes mentioned in Chapter iv.

^xhis hand ^xhis tune ^xhis mynd sowght ^xhis lay.

XIX, 430, 31.

^xhe poyntes ^xhe ^xpawsithe ^xhe wonders ^xhe praysythe: pay-
sithe.

XIX, 436, 12.

^xHére ^xmy prayer o lord ^xhere ^xmý request.

XIX, 442, 1.

^xnow bryght ^xnow browne ^xnow bent ^xnow full and ^xnów
her light is owt.

XIX, 446, 64.

The following examples belong to the second class:

and ^xpéce mele in ^xpecés though I be torn.

XVIII, 275, 26.

but treted after a ^xdývérs fasshion

and therupon my ^xdýversnés doeth rise

but you that blamè this ^xdývérsnés ^xmoost.

XVIII, 285, 7 ff.

of suche a rote cometh ^xfrrúyte ^xfrrúytlés.

XVIII, 465, 14.

that causeth ^xjóy full dolourous

and eke the samè right ^xjóyús.

yet though thy chayn hathe me enwraþt

spite of thy ^xháp ^xháp hath well ^xhápþ.

XVIII, 459, 4ff.

^xrichely she fedeth and at the ^xrichemans cost.

XVIII, 513, 23.

That man that hath his ^xhért away

if ^xlýff ^xlývéth there as men say

that he *hertl^xés* should last on day
 a *lyv^xë* & not torn to clay
 Twixt *lyff^x* and deth say what who sayth

there *lyv^xeth* no *lyff^x* that draweth breth
 they Joyne so nere & eke I feith
 to seke for *lyff^x* by wissh of deth.

XIX, 175, 11 ff.

thy gret *unhap* y^u canst not hid
unhappy thenne why art y^u not dede.
Unhappy but no wretche therfore
 for *happe* doth come again and goo
 for whiche I kepe my self in store

sins *únhap^x* cannot kil me soo.

XIX, 195, 43 ff.

let me remembre the *happes* most *únhapp^xy*: *cómmónl^xy*.

XIX, 196, 6.

But if my hope *somt^xy^e* ryse up by *sóme* redresse.

XIX, 206, 89.

kynges from *kyngdómes^x* & cytes undermyndyth.

XIX, 420, 30.

It semid now that of his fawt the *hórróur^x*
 did make aferd no more his hope of grace

the thretes where off in *hórríblé^x* errour.

XIX, 426, 9 ff.

glad^x teris distills as *gládsome^x* recompense.

XIX, 429, 12.

that *mórtall^x* vaile hathe *ímmórtálite^x*.

XIX, 442, 15.

Artýke^x the tone northward we se *Antártýke^x* tother hight.

XIX, 445, 24. (?)

The following examples belong to the third class:

I plede and [^]*reason* my selffe emonge
 agaynst ^x*resón* how I suffer: evér.

xviii, 276, 11, 12.

all other thoughte : in this ^x*onely* to spede
 and he was ^x*ónely* counsellor of this dede.

xviii, 278, 32, 33.

sigh then ^x*nó* more syns *nó* way man may fynde.

xviii, 464, 4.

Of ^x*thát* *that* is now with ^x*that* *thát* has ben.

xviii, 466, 2.

It helpeth not but to encrese

^x*that*: *thát* by prouff can be no more

^x*that* is the hete ^x*that* cannot cesse
 and *thát* I have to crave so sore.

xviii, 471, 22 ff.

In the poem beginning *Patience though I have not*, xviii, 474, 475, the word *patience* is used 18 times in the 48 lines; 15 times it is accented *patience*; 3 times, *pátience*. Arsis-thesis variation seems to be intended in the following lines, when the numerous other unmistakable cases are taken into consideration.

^x*pátience* withoute offence

is a painfull ^x*patience*

^x*Paciens* for my devise

^x*Impáciens* for your part

.

^x*paciens* then take him up

and drynck of *páciens* cupp.

Paciénc no force for that.

XVIII, 474, 23 ff.

so call *I* for helpe: *I* not when ne where.

XVIII, 480, 11.

But happe and *hit* or els *hit* not.

XVIII, 501, 5.

trust me I *trúst* to temper it so.

XVIII, 501, 18.

blame by *honoúr* and *hónour* to desyer.

but how may I nowe this *honoúr* attaine.

XVIII, 507, 16, 17.

with *Venus* and *Backús* all their lif longe.¹⁷

XVIII, 507, 23.

of highe *Césár* and dampne Cato to die
that with his death did scape out of the gate

from *Césars* hands if Livie do not lye.

XVIII, 508, 38 ff.¹⁸

With the neryst *vertúe* to cloke always the vice
and as to pourpose like wise it shall fall

to presse the *vertúe* that it may not rise.

XVIII, 508, 61 ff.

¹⁷ Cf. Hoccleve's line, *And do to Bachus and Venús homage*, EETS. Ext. Ser. 72, 140, l. 3890.

¹⁸ Cf. Hoccleve, EETS. Ext. Ser. 72, 118, 3271-3273.

^xI cannot ^xī ^xnó nó it will not be.

XVIII, 509, 76.

^xcould overcome but *could* not use his chaunce.

XIX, 178, 2.^b

^xTo love and *tó* be wise.

XIX, 190, 57, 64.

w^t *thát* *that* ^xy^{us} in sorowe makethe me sad.

XIX, 194, 10.

^xDo way all rage and se y^u *dó* escewe.

XIX, 197, 25.

so sternly sore *this* ^xprophet *this* Nathan.

XIX, 421, 39.

the sowle w^t *mercy*, y^t ^x*mércy* so did Crye

and fownd ^x*mércý* at plentifull ^x*mércyes* hand.

XIX, 429, 6, 7.

hást to my help ^x*hast* lord and *hást* apace

O lord the lord off all my helthe alone.

XIX, 432, 22 ff.

fayntyng for hete, provokyd by ^x*some* wind

in *some* freshe shaade lith downe at mydes off day.

XIX, 432, 2, 3.

and for thi ^x*mércyes* nomber w^towt end

.

ffor those ^x*mércyes* mucche more then man can syn
do way my synns y^t so thy grace offend.

agayne ^xwashe me, but *wáshe* me well w^tin.

xix, 433, 5 ff.

w^t hysope *clénse* ^x*clénse* me & I ame clene.

xix, 434, 44.

make ^x*syón* lord acordyng to thy will.

inward ^x*syón* the ^x*syón* of the ghost.

xix, 435, 77, 78.

The *Proemium* to *Psalm* 102, *Anglia* xix, 435 ff., abounds in word-play of various kinds. The opening lines show undoubted instances of the variation in its several classes:

^x*off* diepe secretes y^t David here did sing

^x*off* mercy ^x*off* faith ^x*off* frailte ^x*off* grace

^x*off* *gódes* ^x*goodnés* and *óff* Justyfying

the grettnes ^xdyd so astoune hymselff a space

as *whó* myght say ^x*who* hathe exprest this thing?

^x*I* synner *I* what have ^x*I* sayd alas?

y^t *góddes* ^x*goodnés* wold w^tin my song entrete.

xix, 435, 1 ff.

he dare ^x*Importúne* the lord on every syde
for he knowth well to mercy is ascrybid

respectles labour ^x*Importúne* cry and call.

xix, 436, 29 ff.

Incline to me ^x*thyne* ere and *thyne* Intent.

xix, 437, 6.

The passage in *Psalm* 102 beginning with l. 43 and ending with l. 67 uses the word *Syon* with the varying accents *Sýon*^x and *Syón*^x. However, this variation is not found in two consecutive lines. In spite of this fact, I believe Wyatt had the variation in mind. Cf. xix, 435, 77, 78.

ffrom^x depth of sin & *fróm* a *diepe* dispaire
from depth of deth from depth of hertes sorow

from this *diepe*^x cave off darknes *diepe* repayre.
xix, 440, 1 ff.

but of my *sínne*^x *sins* I may pardonne have.
xix, 442, 29.

LIFE.

I was born in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, and was educated in private and public schools of Petersburg and Lynchburg, Virginia, and Atlanta, Georgia. In 1893 I was graduated from the Boys' High School of Atlanta; in 1897, from Randolph-Macon College, Virginia, with the degree of Master of Arts. I was a Master in Norfolk Academy, Norfolk, Virginia, for four years, 1899-1903. In the autumn of 1903 I entered the Johns Hopkins University and pursued graduate study in English, French, and Philosophy. I was Virginia Scholar three years; Student Assistant to the Collegiate Professor of English for one year; Fellow in English, 1905-1906; Doctor of Philosophy, 1907; Instructor in English, 1907-1908. Since September, 1908, I have been Instructor in English at Dartmouth College.

